Chair's Summary

High-Level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific

Realizing Circular Societies Towards Achieving SDGs and Carbon Neutrality in Asia-Pacific

3-5 March 2025, Rajasthan International Centre (RIC), Jaipur, India

I. Introduction

1. The transition to circular societies is crucial for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement's climate objectives. In particular, the Asia-Pacific region where resource demands and waste generation and diversification are growing rapidly, has an opportunity to lead the transition towards circular societies, creating a sustainable path for economic growth while addressing pressing environmental challenges. By integrating circular economy principles into policies and practices, Asia-Pacific countries can accelerate progress toward the SDGs and carbon neutrality, ensuring a resilient and sustainable future for all.

2. With this objective, the high-level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific was organized with an objective to chart pathways and opportunities for realizing circular societies in the region, with a focus on achieving the SDGs. To this regard, the 12th Forum aimed to discuss and agree a new voluntary and legally non-binding 3R and Circular Economy Declaration (2025-2035) for achieving resource efficient, clean, resilient and sound material cycle in Asia and the Pacific. The new Declaration aims to act as a policy guiding framework and catalyst for countries to facilitate integration of sustainable consumption and production practices as well as circular economy principles into their overall policy, planning and development, including infrastructure development.

3. In the context of delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the outcomes of the 2023 SDG Summit and the 2024 Summit of the Future, the 12th Forum highlighted the benefits of setting countries on a sustainable development path and to strive for a world that is safe, peaceful, just, equal, inclusive, sustainable and prosperous, a world in which well-being, security and dignity and a healthy planet are assured for all humanity. The 12th Forum featured high-level plenary sessions, technical discussions, roundtables and knowledge-sharing opportunities to explore innovative policies, practices, institutional arrangements and technologies.

4. The 12th Forum was hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India, and co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment,

Government of Japan, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA).

5. The 12th Forum was supported by the State Government of Rajasthan along with a number of international and donor organizations such as –United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN FAO), United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), International Labour Organization (ILO), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), Japan Society of Material Cycles and Waste Management (JSMCWM), 3R International Scientific Conference on Material Cycles and Waste Management (3RINCs), International Society of Waste Management, Air and Water (ISWMAW)/ IPLA Global Secretariat, International Academy of Environmental Sanitation and Public Health (IAESPH), ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), EU SWITCH-Asia, Policy Support Component Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS), National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in India, among others.

6. The 12th Forum was attended (predominantly physically and a lesser number virtually) by approximately 1900 participants comprising of national and local government representatives, the UN and international organizations, scientific and research organizations, the private sector, NGOs, individual experts and resource persons from about 37 countries including, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Cooks Island, Denmark, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Island, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

II. Pre-events, Side Events and Technical Exhibition

7. A number of pre-events, side events and technical exhibitions as listed below were organized under the aegis of the High-level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific.

   - Pre-event 1: 14th International Conference on Sustainable Waste Management - Circular Economy and IPLA Global Forum 2024, 28 November-1 December 2024, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, International Society of Waste Management Air and Water;

- Side Event 1: Decarbonization Technologies in the Waste and Resources Sector for Realizing a Circular Economy, 3 March 2025, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, explored scaling up municipal 3R initiatives. Osaki Town's 84% recycling rate demonstrated success through waste segregation, composting, and community participation. Kopernik's waste-to-resource models showcased solutions in food waste management, rainwater infiltration, and regenerative agriculture. Discussions focused on zero-waste cities, formalizing the informal sector, expanding recycling beyond 3R, and public involvement. Economic viability, decentralized waste management, and monetization of ecosystem services were key takeaways.

- Side Event 2: Accelerating Circular Society: Expansion and Reproducibility of Municipal Achievements in 3R and Circular Economy, 3 March 2025, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, focused on decarbonization technologies in waste and resources. Innovations in waste-to-energy (WtE), carbon capture, and circular resource management were presented, highlighting carbon-negative incineration, syngas production, and decentralized wastewater treatment. Case studies from Japan, India, and Southeast Asia showcased successful implementation. Discussions covered landfill management, alternative fuel production, and AI-driven waste monitoring. The session called for policy reforms, knowledge-sharing, and global cooperation to expand decarbonization technologies.;

- Side Event 3: India Pathways to Circular Economy, 4 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India, explored challenges and opportunities to integrate circularity across municipal functions, including waste to energy, waste-water reuse and reduction in the use of virgin materials among others. Replicable good practices and innovative approaches in waste management, resource recovery, and sustainable urban planning were showcased. Curated resources and reports were launched – SBM Waste to Wealth PMS Portal; NIUA's India's Circular Sutra: A compendium of practices; IFC's Document Reference Guide: Business Models and Economic Assistance for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Projects; and CEEW's Tailoring the solid waste management practices: An outlook from cities with a million-plus population to guide policymakers and practitioners in adopting circular economy strategies. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between CSIR and MoHUA. The role of citizen-led initiatives in fostering sustainable urban ecosystems was highlighted.

- Side Event 4: Mayors Policy Dialogue on Circular Economy, 3 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India, focused on transitioning cities to a circular economy, highlighting zero-waste practices, waste segregation, composting, biogas production, and waste-to-energy projects. Discussions stressed community participation, behavioural change, and school engagement to promote sustainable habits. Innovation in recycling and upcycling was encouraged, aligning with local sustainability initiatives.

- Side Event 5: Business Roundtable, 5 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India: The industry leaders highlighted the role of businesses in developing circular economy ideas within industries. The discussion was focused on sustainable waste management, resource efficiency, and new business models. The discussions emphasized on plastic production, biogas, and waste management, exchanged good practices, challenges, and collaborative solutions for building a more resource-efficient future. The discussion stressed the need and importance of shifting mindsets from waste disposal to resource efficiency, aligning with India's vision for a 'Viksit Bharat'.

- Side Event 6: The CITIIS 2.0 Rollout, 3 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India: The CITIIS 2.0 programme was launched to strengthen circular economy principles through integrated waste management, climate-responsive governance, and institutional development. Funded by EUR 100 million each from AFD and KfW, with a EUR 12 million EU grant, the programme builds on CITIIS 1.0. Component 1 supports 18 cities with INR 1,496 crore for waste management solutions. Component 2 provides INR 264 crore for climate governance in 21 States/ UTs. Component 3, led by MoHUA through NIUA, focuses on technical assistance and capacity building, funded entirely by the INR 106 crore EU grant. Agreements under CITIIS 2.0 were signed at the India Pavilion on 3rd March.

- Side Event 7: Case Clinics on Circular Economy, 3 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India, brought together Secretaries and Commissioners to share state and city-level circular economy strategies. Representatives from Gujarat, Karnataka, Goa, and Warangal presented waste management models, highlighting the role of public-private partnerships, community involvement, and revenue-generating initiatives in supporting sustainable urban transitions. The key activities by the Indian states included source segregation, e-waste management, and biogas generation, along with innovative practices. Goa shared its structured regional waste management model, built without landfills and based on public-private partnerships, strong IEC, and deep integration of SHGs and former ragpickers. Ladakh presented its unique cold-region challenges and emphasized decentralized systems, fecal sludge management, and climate-adapted solutions like Trombe walls and scrap art. The states highlighted importance of scaling decentralized models, integrating startups, strengthening PPPs, and investing in behavioral change through children and communities. The reflections on the need for standardized technologies, better implementation, and financial innovation were focused to embed a true culture of circularity.

- Side Event 8: Tech Solutions for Circularity- Opportunities & Challenges, 5 March 2025, India Pavilion, RIC, Jaipur, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Government of India, emphasized the critical role of technology in waste management, addressing policy gaps, segregation challenges, and the urgent need

for increased investment in research and development. The session highlighted the potential of AI, machine learning, and digital tracking solutions to enhance waste collection, transportation, and processing efficiency. However, while AI has been successfully integrated into public services like water management, its application in waste management remains limited. The key concerns in technology were emphasised such as lack of technological maturity, data quality and poor input quality. The session advocated for decentralized waste management and increased R&D funding, noting that India significantly needs technological investment. The importance of real-time tracking through IoT and AI-based monitoring was underscored, especially for ensuring effective door-to-door waste collection. A call for better feedstock assessment and waste characterization, integration of informal sector, reducing waste at the source and innovations for recycling mechanisms was stressed.

- Technical Exhibition: Honorable Shri Manohar Lal, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) of the Government of India, officially inaugurated the Technical Exhibition. A number of corporate and private sector from India and Japan displayed their state of art 3R and circular economy technologies and knowhow and best practices as an integral component of the Forum. It provided opportunities for business and corporate sectors to explore possible partnerships and collaboration with participating countries of the Forum.

III. Opening Session

8. The High-level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific was officially inaugurated by Honorable Shri Manohar Lal, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) of the Government of India.

9. Welcoming the Forum delegates, Shri Katikithala Srinivas, Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) remarked that India had the honour to host the eighth edition of the Forum in 2018 in Indore City, Madhya Pradesh. He extended his sincere gratitude to the Honorable Chief Minister of Rajasthan, the State Government of Rajasthan, and the officials of the Rajasthan Government for supporting MoHUA in hosting the 12th Forum in Jaipur City. As urbanization accelerates, he emphasized that this Forum would drive stronger interventions for waste management and circularity. There is a need to collaborate to minimize dependence on virgin raw materials through effective reduction, reuse, and recycling strategies, fostering a truly sustainable environment. This Forum marks a pivotal step in advancing circular economies across the Asia-Pacific region, shaping policies, catalyzing action, and accelerating the process toward achieving SDGs.

10. Delivering his opening statement, H.E. Mr. ASAO Keiichiro, Minister of the Environment, Government of Japan, recognized at the outset Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's emphasis on the circular economy as a key pillar for India for sustainable growth and environmental conservation. Mentioning India’s initiative of integrating circular economy and resource efficiency principles across industries,

agriculture, and urban development, India aims to pursue economic growth with environmental responsibility, which is evident from India's several phrase-worthy initiatives, such as the Clean India Mission (Swachh Bharat Mission) and Smart Cities. In Asia and the Pacific region, rapid economic growth has entailed an increasing amount of waste generation, causing public health issues and environmental pollution, including plastic pollution. As to e-waste in particular, Asia is the major generator that accounted for nearly half of the total generation across the world in 2022 and is anticipated to increase its amount in the future. Moreover, the majority of the e-waste has been managed improperly by the informal sector, leading to environmental pollution of soil and water and public health issues. He further elaborated that the Japanese government approved the 5th Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material Cycle Society in August 2024 - positioning the transition to a circular economy as a national strategy, which is a key component in forming the Society. In addition, a new Ministerial Council on Circular Economy has been established to promote this transition, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies. As we are in greater need of transformational changes to address urgent environmental challenges, H.E encouraged countries to adopt the Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035) at this Forum. The 10-year Jaipur Declaration, the successor to the Hanoi Declaration, is a pioneering declaration in the world that promotes sustainable development in the Asia and Pacific region. It provides a framework to advance the transition to circular economies and improve resource efficiency for the next critical decade. It also aims to catalyze multilayer cooperation and partnerships in advancing collaborative actions towards achieving the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and other international environmental agreements.

11. In delivering his special address, Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), emphasized the need for integration of sustainable consumption and production practices as well as circular economy principles into the development of national policies with a particular focus on infrastructure development. India has taken bold steps towards developing a roadmap for a circular economy as a key pillar for its sustainable growth and environmental conservation agenda. Achieving the transition to circular economy demands political commitment, technological breakthroughs, and collaborations.

    Working together with governments, businesses, and communities can build a future where resources are valued, waste is eliminated, and the economy and environment can both thrive. Harnessing digital innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), and smarter infrastructure can drive efficiency in waste management and resource recovery under low-carbon manufacturing. The Asia-Pacific region is uniquely positioned to spearhead transformation and set an example for the world. The Under-Secretary of UN DESA thanked the Excellencies and distinguished delegates on this high-level Forum on circular economy - a topic of significant importance for protecting and sustaining our ecosystems. He further thanked the Governments of India and Japan, UN entities, State Government of Rajasthan, and other partners for co-organizing this event, together with UN DESA. He further appreciated the Government of Japan for its continued generous support to Asia's 3R and the Circular Economy Initiative led by the United Nations Center for Regional Development (UNCRD). It is a pivotal moment in history as humanity is facing a global sustainable development crisis. The latter

includes the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and worsening pollution. These crises are exacerbated by the compounding effects of development challenges, including setbacks in poverty eradication and combating inequality. It is in that context that last September, World Leaders adopted the "Pact for the Future" and committed to transformative actions to accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Member States adopted a resolution to reach a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution and proclaimed 30th of March as the International Day of Zero Waste to raise global awareness and spur action. He emphasized that transitioning into a circular society will create a sustainable model that aligns economic growth with environmental stewardship. This transformation will accelerate the transition toward carbon neutrality, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the cost of environmental destruction. However, achieving this vision demands political commitment, technological breakthroughs, and collaborations. As the world's most populous and economically vibrant region, rapid growth has contributed to improving the living standards. However, this growth has also impacted on the region's resource efficiency and the natural capital, resulting in shrinking forests, biodiversity loss, and depleted water resources. The Asia-Pacific region is uniquely positioned to spearhead transformation and set an example for the world. He encouraged this Forum to establish a new policy framework to facilitate the integration of sustainable consumption and production practices as well as circular economy principles into the development of national policies with a particular focus on infrastructure development.

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12. Delivering her special address, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), emphasized the need to develop national, sub-regional as well as regional circular economy road maps as well as to put concerted efforts to build more circular material cycles into all business operations. The Asia Pacific region has experienced rapid economic growth, urbanization, and industrialization over the last few decades. This growth, which is based on a linear economy growth model of "take-make-and-dispose" is no longer sustainable. The use of resources and primary materials will push the limits of the planet. The Executive Secretary expressed her appreciation to the Governments of India and Japan, as well as the State Government of Rajasthan, for supporting the organization of this Forum. She encouraged the countries and international community to work with existing platforms such as the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network (ESBN) through its Asia Pacific Green Deal for Business. She highlighted the need to develop a policy framework to catalyze transformational changes in resource efficiency, promote new financing models, and enable zero-waste societies in the region. On behalf of ESCAP, she expressed continued support to work with governments, the private sector, and stakeholders to strengthen cooperation in advancing circular economy approaches.

13. Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Rajasthan, in his special address underscored a number of challenges such as the exploitation of natural resources has significantly increased over the last 50 years. The use of these resources has risen by almost 400 percent since the 1970s, and it is estimated to cross 106 billion tonnes, whereas 90% of the resources are wasted, and only 8.6% get back into the production

cycle. He welcomed and thanked respected guests, participants, and experts to the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum. He thanked the Government of India, the Government of Japan, UN ESCAP, and UNCRD/UN DESA for co-organizing the Forum. He elaborated significant steps taken by the State of Rajasthan under the Swachh Bharat Mission. India has launched the largest waste management and cleanliness drive, including the Circular Economy Roadmap focusing on 11 key sectors, including municipal solid waste, electronic waste, solar panels, and industrial waste.

14. Delivering the special address as the Chief Guest of the Forum, Shri Manohar Lal, Hon. Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India, underscored India's pride in hosting the 12th 3R Forum in Jaipur. He emphasized the importance of reviving traditional practices by integrating them with modern innovations and new technology, promoting conscious consumption, efficient recycling systems, and environmental responsibility. He underscored the importance of Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035), a non-political and non-binding commitment to resource efficiency, and a sustainable future. Seven years ago, after the successful hosting of the 8th Forum in Indore, India is once again bringing together global leaders and playing a key role in advancing the agenda of 3R and Circular Economy through the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific being hosted in Jaipur. He highlighted the fact that the 3R and Circular Economy is not just an environmental responsibility today, it has become an economic necessity for a sustainable future. Noting the Hon'ble Prime Minister's mission towards adopting Circular Economy, he remarked it could drive self-reliance for India and other nations. At COP26 in 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, the Honorable Prime Minister of India introduced Panchamrit Goals, which included the commitment to achieve Net-Zero emissions by 2070. This is also a continuation of India's commitment to the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) aims at promoting sustainable consumption, reducing waste, and encouraging eco-friendly practices at both individual and community levels. India is playing a pioneering role in integrating the Circular Economy into national policies. The Government of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on October 2, 2014, under the aegis of hon'ble Prime Minister and has witnessed phenomenal reach and has been instrumental in achieving ODF (open defecation free) through the construction of 10 crore new toilets and villages being declared as ODF. Honourable Minister elaborated that recently with completion of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) marked its 10th anniversary, India has entered a new decade with a focus on Bio-CNG, Plastic waste management, Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and Legacy waste remediation. Additionally, AMRUT 2.0 (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) is promoting water circularity, including wastewater recycling, water body rejuvenation and conservation efforts. Hon. Minister also shared Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's special message for the Forum. His message reaffirmed his commitment to 3R and Circular Economy and highlights India's dedication to providing a platform for global discussions on this crucial issue. As a concrete way forward, the Minister announced the establishment of Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3), which is envisaged as a multi-stakeholder, multi-national alliance involving city officials, mayors, industry, academia, knowledge institutions, and multilateral financial institutions. C-3 will help convene different stakeholders, engage partners to share knowledge, promote research collaboration, unlock financing opportunities, and

share technical capacity, among others. He also shared Hon'ble Prime Minister's remark that the 12th Forum would be a precursor to the World Circular Economy Forum that would be hosted by India in 2026.

The full transcript of Opening Statements and Special Addresses are available at the Forum site of UNCRD: https://uncrd.un.org/content/12th-3r-ce-forum

IV. Keynote Address 1

15. Prof. Shinichi Sakai, Dr. & Emeritus Professor of Kyoto University, Advanced Science, Technology & Management Research Institute of Kyoto, Japan, delivered a keynote speech on "Advancing Circular Society in Asia-Pacific - Key to Achieve SDGs and Carbon Neutrality", which focused on circular economy strategies as essential for achieving SDGs and carbon neutrality. Discussions highlighted sustainable material circulation through the 3R Plus approach, prioritizing waste prevention, plastic recycling, and decarbonization. Food waste reduction, plastic waste management, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from waste treatment were identified as major challenges, with an emphasis on waste-to-energy solutions, biogas utilization, and improved landfill management. Japan's '3R + Renewable' initiative and Net Zero by 2050 strategy were presented as models for reducing single-use plastics, promoting circular resource management, and integrating carbon capture technologies. The session covered planetary boundaries, fair transitions for sustainability, and disaster waste management, highlighting past global disasters to stress the need for resilient waste systems. The Clean-Cycle-Control (3C) approach was introduced to minimize hazardous waste and stabilize emissions. The session concluded with a call for international cooperation, technological innovation, and systemic policy reforms to advance a resource-efficient future.

V. High-Level Ministerial Statements

16. Honorable Shri Manohar Lal, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) of the Government of India, highlighted India's leadership in the circular economy, drawing on its cultural heritage of sustainability, large-scale waste management, and energy transition goals. Discussions focused on waste segregation, resource recovery, waste-to-energy projects, and material recycling, with cities and states implementing biogas plants, plastic recycling, and integrated urban planning. Electric mobility, charging infrastructure, and sustainable urban development were also central to discussions. The forum stressed digital governance, AI-driven waste monitoring, and policy coordination to scale circular economy solutions. Green budgeting, financial incentives for circular economy startups, and zero-waste city targets demonstrated commitment to low-carbon development. Discussions highlighted the need for global collaboration, private sector participation, and knowledge-sharing platforms to accelerate urban sustainability and resource efficiency. He finally urged all nations to collaborate in supporting the implementation of the Jaipur Declaration. I call upon our international partners, UN organizations, regional and sub-regional commissions, and intergovernmental bodies to join forces in this effort. A crucial step in implementing the Jaipur Declaration is translating its goals into national and local policies, strategies,

targets, and projects, while considering each country's priorities, circumstances, and capabilities.

17. Shri Kailash Vijayvargiya, Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development & Housing, State Government of Madhya Pradesh, India, said Madhya Pradesh remains dedicated to waste management, resource recovery, and sustainable urban development, promoting efficient recycling, waste-to-energy initiatives, and eco-friendly urban planning. Residents of Indore, India's cleanest city, actively uphold its cleanliness through awareness and responsible practices. The Swachh Bharat Mission has transformed public mindset, fostering awareness and commitment to cleanliness. The city's best practice of converting segregated wet waste into biogas to fuel public vehicles has inspired the GOBARdhan initiative. A notable example is the plantation of 12 lakh trees, watered using STP-treated water. Efforts can further improve by striving for net-zero waste at social events. However, achieving this goal requires a shift in citizen habits, which can be driven by proactive leadership from public representatives. These strategic initiatives drive Madhya Pradesh's vision of a circular economy and sustainable urban transformation, serving as a model for other regions to follow.

18. Shri Prem Chand Aggarwal, Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development, State Government of Uttarakhand, India, remarked the State had made significant progress in implementing 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and Circular Economy principles, particularly through innovative waste-to-wealth (Kachre to Kancha) and waste-to-energy (Kachre se Urja) projects. Initiatives like a 50-tonne-per-day compressed biogas plant in Haridwar and the successful adoption of the Digital Deposit Refund System during the Char Dham Yatra have contributed to a sustainable state transformation. Uttarakhand has established 85 material recovery facilities, 78 plastic compactors, and 138 refuse-derived fuel units, ensuring that 95 percent of waste is segregated and 90 percent is either recycled or properly disposed of. The state promotes sustainability through metal recovery units, recycling centers, and initiatives like donating old clothes, shoes, and bags to the needy. The state government has allocated ₹500 crore for providing life insurance to sanitation workers. These initiatives reflect Uttarakhand's commitment to sustainability, aligning with national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and promote a cleaner, greener future.

19. Shri Vipul Goel, Hon'ble Minister of Urban Local Bodies, State Government of Haryana, India, remarked that the Government of Haryana was actively advancing solid waste management by integrating 3R principles and the Circular Economy. Door-to-door waste collection has been successfully implemented across all urban local bodies, ensuring efficient waste management at the source. Key cities like Rohtak, Sonipat, Panchkula, and Karnal are implementing source-level segregation of dry and wet waste. To enhance waste processing, Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) have been established in major urban centers for efficient recycling. Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste management plants operate in Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rewari, with planned expansions in Panchkula, Karnal, Yamunanagar, Rohtak, and Hisar. Plans include setting up C&D waste processing units across all municipal corporation areas, reinforcing Haryana's commitment to sustainable waste management. The

government is addressing road dust pollution through mechanized sweeping, water sprinkling, and afforestation while promoting the recycling of C&D waste into construction materials such as tiles, blocks, and interlocking bricks. The state's future roadmap focuses on enhancing urban sanitation, increasing the production of Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) and compost, and enforcing environmental policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key initiatives include achieving 100 percent ODF++ certification, banning single-use plastics, implementing air quality management plans, and leveraging AI and GPS technology for waste monitoring. Additionally, Haryana is strengthening governance by standardizing waste management policies and providing financial and technical support to urban local bodies. With a vision to transform its cities into zero-waste and low-carbon societies, the state remains committed to innovation and sustainability while learning from global best practices through international forums.

20. Shri Jhabar Singh Kharra, Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development, Government of Rajasthan, India, the Asia-Pacific region, accounting for two-thirds of global development, faces immense challenges due to rapid economic growth, depleting forests, and diminishing water resources. In this context, the Circular Economy emerges as a crucial solution, enabling the reuse and recycling of materials to minimize energy consumption and promote renewable energy. India has taken substantial steps in this direction, notably through the Swachh Bharat Mission and the development of a Circular Economy Roadmap focused on 11 key sectors, including municipal solid waste, electronic waste, and industrial waste. The Rajasthan Government has established an Environmental Management Cell (EMC) and a new policy for treated water reuse. The "Mukhyamantri Sadbhavna Kendra" initiative facilitates the collection and repurposing of non-usable items in urban areas, while efforts are underway to double the state's waste processing capacity to approximately 4.5 million tons. Under the Waste-to-Energy schemes, the government is emphasizing compost production, Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF), and organic fertilizer production. Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) were set up to ensure the segregation of plastic and recyclable materials, while integrated waste management systems handle e-waste, battery waste, and hazardous waste. Rajasthan has remediated 8.8 million cubic meters of legacy waste, reclaiming 326 acres of land. The upcoming Circular Economy Incentive Scheme will provide financial assistance to MSMEs and startups, while the Rajasthan Vehicle Scrapping Policy will facilitate responsible vehicle disposal. To achieve a Zero Waste Society, the government aims to foster collaboration through the Cities Coalition for Circularity (C3), a digital platform for knowledge exchange for cities, technical institutions, and tech providers.

21. Shri. Maina Vakafua Talia, Hon'ble Minister of Tuvalu, remarked that Tuvalu has unique geographical challenges in waste management due to its small landmass of just 26 sq. kms. and its vulnerability to environmental pollution due to increasing consumption of imported goods. The nation is committed to implementing sustainable waste management solutions, but localizing the 3R principles—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle—presents significant challenges due to technological limitations. The government has made efforts to improve waste management through policy

implementation and law enforcement; however, resource constraints and competing socio-economic priorities remain barriers. In August 2024, Tuvalu hosted the Fourth Pacific Roundtable in its capital, showcasing its leadership in waste management while also presenting its challenges to development partners. Additionally, in 2016, the government endorsed a three-year integrated waste management plan, focusing on strengthening institutional systems, fostering public-private partnerships, and improving waste management services. There is a need for a transformative shift from traditional linear economic models to a circular economy, stressing that it should be a moral duty of governments to prioritize sustainability. Investing in and promoting circular economic principles—such as reducing waste, extending material use, and restoring natural ecosystems—is a crucial solution for global environmental challenges. Furthermore, political momentum, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge are identified as key drivers for successfully embedding 3R principles. A strong call was made for enhanced cooperation among multilateral agencies, private sector stakeholders, and development partners to deliver an effective circular economy and foster greater economic integration across this region.

22. Shri Trevor Hedley Manemahaga, Hon'ble Minister of Solomon Islands, said Solomon Islands boasts a rich natural ecosystem but faces pressing global environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution. These crises severely threaten the nation's economy, livelihoods, and the right of future generations to a healthy environment. Acknowledging the urgency of transitioning to a circular economy, the Solomon Islands is committed to integrating the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle into its national development efforts to align with the SDGs. Plastic pollution and marine waste are the pressing issues that needs immediate global action and collective efforts to shift away from unsustainable extraction and consumption patterns toward a zero-waste, resilient, and low-carbon economy. The Solomon Islands strongly supports the Jaipur Declaration (2025-2034), viewing it as an opportunity for enhanced international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and investment in innovative waste management solutions. While the country is committed to implementing policies that foster a circular economy — including the recent legislation banning five types of single-use plastics and ongoing efforts to establish a container deposit scheme — there remains a need for strengthened international support. There is a need for increased financial assistance, technology transfer, and capacity building to effectively implement circular economy initiatives. Acknowledging the role of regional institutions, development partners, and stakeholders, the Solomon Islands remains dedicated to redefining progress not by the quantity of resources extracted but by how efficiently they are used and regenerated. A call for unified global action to secure a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for everyone.

23. Shri Ahmed Nizam, Hon. Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Government of Maldives, remarked Maldives commits to sustainable waste management and circular economy principles. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Maldives faces significant challenges in waste disposal and resource conservation due to its limited land area. There is an urgency to maximize resource efficiency while minimizing environmental impact, aligning with the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3R).

To address these challenges, the Maldives government has implemented key initiatives, including the successful phase-out of single-use plastics. Thirteen specific plastic items have been banned under this initiative, alongside economic measures such as a levy on plastic shopping bags to discourage their use and promote sustainable alternatives. The Maldives National Waste and Resource Management Policy, launched in 2024, aims to transition the country from a throwaway culture to a circular economy by transforming production, import, and consumption patterns in an environmentally responsible manner. The policy incorporates strategies such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and technological advancements to enhance private-sector participation in waste management. These efforts aim to incentivize sustainable business practices while strengthening the overall waste management system. The Maldives remains fully committed to advancing a circular economy and contributes to lower-emission development. Moving forward, the country will focus on building a more resilient and resource-efficient economy that prioritizes environmental stewardship. The Maldives emphasizes regional collaboration and knowledge sharing in transitioning to circular societies, reaffirming its commitment to working with Asia-Pacific nations for a sustainable future.

24. Relaying the Statement of Hon. Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, Shri P.K. Mainalee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Urban Development said Nepal is actively integrating 3R principles into national policies and legal structures, shifting from a linear economy to a circular, zero-waste model. The Ministry of Urban Development, Nepal, is implementing the National Solid Waste Management Policy while drafting new legal instruments to strengthen regulatory frameworks. The local governments and provincial authorities are being encouraged to adopt regional approaches to solid waste management, using waste as a resource to drive environmental sustainability, economic development, and job creation. Technological advancements and practical methodologies are essential for the success of these initiatives. Nepal has established a dedicated institution to develop and implement innovative waste management solutions, emphasizing the "Segregation at Source" approach to minimize overall costs. While the Polluter Pays Principles help cover waste collection and segregation expenses, additional financial mechanisms are required for infrastructure development and land acquisition. Nepal remains committed to reviewing policies based on good practices and recommendations from this forum, recognizing that institutional reforms are key to effective 3R and circular economy implementation. Acknowledging the significance of the Hanoi Declaration (2013 - 2024) and the Jaipur Declaration (2025 - 2035), Nepal appreciates the leadership of UNCRD and UN DESA in crafting a strategic framework for a resource-efficient, clean, and low-carbon society for Asia-Pacific. Nepal reaffirms its commitment to sustainable, resource-efficient, and circular economy practices in alignment with national and global development goals.

25. Mr. Meas Sophal, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment, mentioned in his remarked that the Cambodian government has implemented the Pentagonal Strategy - Phase I for Growth, Employment, Equity, Efficiency and Sustainability by integrating green development and circular economy as a part of the "Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Development" pillar. This pillar specifically addresses the sustainable

management of natural resources, promotes environmental sustainability, and responds to climate change. It also includes initiatives for efficient waste management, supporting the goals of reducing waste and fostering a circular economy. In addition, Cambodia embraces the principles of the 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, and have taken steps to integrate them into our national policies and practices. Cambodia has adopted national strategies, including the Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan, Sustainable Consumption and Production Roadmap and actively participates in regional frameworks like the ASEAN Green Deal. He also emphasized that, Environment and Natural Resources Code enacted to strengthen and improve environmental management, protect, conserve, and restore natural resources, biodiversity, cultural property, and promote sustainable living. In addition, Cambodia is implementing the Circular Strategy on Environment 2023–2028, focusing on the three pillars: Clean, Green, and Sustainable by transforming the potential of environmental sector for the benefits of Cambodians, ensuring ecological responses to climate change, and promoting green development. The Ministry of Environment is running an anti-plastic campaign under the theme "*Today, I don't use plastic bags*" involving more than 10 million people from all walk of life, more than half of the whole population participating in committing not to use plastic bags and to clean up plastic waste from public areas in all water sources to protect the natural environment while preserving resources for future generations. In parallel, we also run a campaign to "Green Cambodia" by planting over one million trees on the first year (2024) and increase annually to expand forest cover towards carbon neutrality by 2050.Cambodia has committed to implementing policies that align with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, ensuring that Cambodia's development is clean, green, resilient, and inclusive. Therefore, promoting eco-friendly technologies and practices are encouraged with participation from public private partnership and knowledge exchange with other participating countries toward a cleaner, and more sustainable world for further generations.

26. Minister of Energy and Resources, Bhutan (represented by the delegate from Bhutan) remarked Bhutan being a small landlocked nation in the fragile Himalayan ecosystem, faces significant climate change challenges. Despite limited economic growth, it remains committed to environmental conservation, with 69% forest cover and a constitutional mandate to maintain at least 60%. However, growing urbanization, population, and economic expansion are straining natural resources, highlighting the need for circular economy principles to ensure sustainable development. Bhutan is in the early stages of incorporating circular economy concepts into its national development framework, particularly in agriculture, livestock, and forestry. Implementing circular practices alongside improved waste management and climate-smart technologies can drive entrepreneurship, create sustainable livelihoods, and enhance environmental conservation. However, challenges such as technological adoption, capacity building, governance, and financing persist. Emphasizing collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and regional partnerships, Bhutan seeks to integrate circular economy principles into its development plans and work closely with international partners to achieve the SDGs.

27. Mr. KATSUME Yasushi, Hon. Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Ministry of the Environment, Japan (represented by the delegate of Japan), said Japan has made significant strides toward a circular economy with the Cabinet's approval of the Fifth Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, emphasizing resource efficiency and waste reduction. A key initiative is the Resource Circulation Enhancement Act, enacted in May last year, which strengthens recycling by integrating manufacturers with recycling businesses to ensure a stable supply of high-quality recycled materials, supporting carbon reduction and sustainable waste management. Additionally, Japan introduced the Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency Principles (CEREP), endorsed at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in 2023, to guide global private sector initiatives in advancing circular economy practices. Acknowledging the rise in waste generation driven by economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan is dedicated to international cooperation to address environmental challenges such as plastic pollution and improper e-waste disposal. The Japan-ASEAN Resource Circulation Partnership on E-Waste and Critical Minerals (ARCPEC) was established to manage e-waste through a comprehensive approach, including regulatory framework development, capacity building, and private sector collaboration. Traditional practices like Kimono reuse in Japan and sari upcycling in India showcase cultural heritage-driven circularity, reflecting generations-old resource conservation strategies in both countries. By combining technological advancements with traditional wisdom, local governments and communities play a crucial role in accelerating the transition to a circular economy. Japan remains committed to fostering strong multilateral cooperation to build a resilient, sustainable, and resource-efficient global economy.

28. Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Undersecretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Government of the Philippines (represented by the delegate from the Philippines) remarked that the Philippines generates approximately 61,000 metric tons of solid waste daily, with 12-24% being plastic waste. Alarmingly, only 33% of this waste is properly disposed of in landfills, while 35% leaks into the environment, contributing to ocean pollution. The country's waste management is governed by Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000), which mandates local government units (LGUs) to implement 10-year waste management plans, and Republic Act 11898 (Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022), which shifts plastic waste management responsibility from LGUs to producers. While 89% of LGUs have approved SWM plans, only 53% have access to sanitary landfills, highlighting gaps in infrastructure. The EPR law, enacted in 2022, aims for plastic neutrality through producer-led recovery programs. Key milestones include the launch of the EPR Registry in 2023, with 978 companies now enrolled. Despite progress, challenges remain—such as limited data systems, fragmented waste collection infrastructure, and high implementation costs. To address these, the DENR issued DAO 2024-04, providing compliance guidance for obligated enterprises. Looking ahead, the Philippines remains committed to strengthening its circular economy efforts, supported by the National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP) launched in 2025, uniting over 140 leaders from government, the private sector, and civil society. With strategic policies, investments, and collective action, the country aims to build a cleaner, more sustainable future for all.

29. Ms. Rizawati Abdul Kadir, Under-Secretary of Urban Sustainability Division from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government of Malaysia (represented by the delegate from the Malaysia) delivered the Ministerial Statement on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Housing and Local Government of Malaysia, Mr. Nga Kor Ming. The Minister conveys his sincere apologies for not being able to attend due to urgent parliamentary obligations. Malaysia extends its appreciation to the United Nations Centre for Regional Development of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development Goals, for organizing the High-Level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs of Government of India, the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and with support from the State Government of Rajasthan. Recognizing the importance of the circular economy for sustainable growth, Malaysia, generating approximately 39,000 tonnes of solid waste daily, has adopted the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021–2025), which emphasizes circular economy principles to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Circular Economy Blueprint for Solid Waste (2025–2035) outlines 5 Strategic Pillars, 20 Initiatives, and 61 Action Plans aimed at maximizing resource efficiency and minimizing waste generation, in line with the Paris Agreement. The National Circular Economy Council (NCEC) unites stakeholders to monitor progress and drive reforms. Looking ahead, the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (2026–2030) will focus on developing a legal framework for circular economy, drafting the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Policy, promoting the 9R Principles, and enhancing waste treatment facilities. Malaysia urges continued international cooperation to achieve meaningful outcomes for our people, our nations, and our planet.

30. Mr. Tereapii Kavana, Hon. Associate Minister at Support Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Cook Islands extend gratitude to the people and government of India for their hospitality and to the Secretariat for its diligent preparations. The Cook Islands, like many Pacific nations, face the direct impacts of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution. As stewards of the world's largest ocean, the Pacific is central to our geography, culture, and economy, making sustainable management crucial for current and future generations. Marking the 60th anniversary of self-governance, he mentioned that Conservation Act 1975, which laid the foundation for environmental management, now expanded from the 3Rs to the 5Rs—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle. Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill and zero-waste target, outlined in the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ and National Environment Policy 2022-2032, reinforce this commitment. Currently, 27.15% of waste in Rarotonga is recycled, with strategic partnerships like Coca-Cola and Moana Taka supporting the removal of recyclables. Ongoing initiatives such as the Legacy Waste Project have removed 286,101 kgs of waste from Rarotonga and Aitutaki, with plans to expand to other islands. Collaborations under PacWaste and GEF-7 enhance recycling systems and central waste collection. Additionally, we engage with the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) and GEF-8 to address plastic pollution by reducing plastic entry into the Cook Islands and promoting reuse options. Recognizing the high costs of waste disposal due to our size and isolation, their focus

remains on reducing waste, fostering circular business models, and shifting away from the linear 'take-make-use-disregard' system. Despite challenges such as resource limitations and technical gaps, the Cook Islands is committed to innovative, sustainable solutions through collaboration, capacity building, and integrating traditional knowledge with modern science. This journey requires global action. He called for a shift to a sustainable, resilient, climate-neutral, and nature-positive economy — one that embraces the circular economy.

31. On behalf of the Minister of Environment of the Government of Sri Lanka, Additional Secretary (Natural Resources) Mr. Weliwatta W.D.S.C. delivered the high-level statement. Sri Lanka reaffirms its strong commitment to advancing the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) principles and transitioning towards a circular economy as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The country has embedded sustainability into its national policies, aligning with global commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key policy frameworks, including the National Environment Policy and the National Waste Management Policy (2020), emphasize sustainable waste management, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and the promotion of circular economy principles. Under its National Action Plan on Plastic Waste Management (2021-2030), Sri Lanka has set ambitious targets, including an 80% reduction in single-use plastics and enhanced recycling efforts. Legislative amendments to the National Environment Act further strengthen these initiatives by mandating stricter regulations. Additionally, Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) have been established through public-private partnerships to enhance waste processing and recycling. Recognizing the importance of global cooperation, Sri Lanka aims to strengthen regional partnerships and access climate finance to drive circular economy innovations. The country remains steadfast in its commitment to building a resilient, resource-efficient, and inclusive circular economy, driving transformative change for a sustainable future.

32. On behalf of Minister of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bangladesh, Joint Secretary, MD. Rezaul Karim, delivered the high-level statement. Bangladesh integrates waste management into national strategies to reduce waste and enhance resource efficiency. Its plastic policy targets a 50 percent cut in raw material use, a 30 percent waste reduction, and a 90 percent phase-out of single-use plastics by 2030, with an 80 percent recycling goal. The readymade garment sector, a key driver of economic growth, embraces circular models to minimize textile waste. Recognizing the need for robust regulatory frameworks, Bangladesh is developing regulations for hazardous waste, medical waste, and chemicals. Additionally, the country is developing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) directive, alternative product design policies, and national reuse efficiency guidelines to enhance recyclability. Promoting public-private collaboration and green investments, the country aligns its circular economy roadmap with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), urging regional support for technical and financial assistance including capacity-building initiatives, to enable an inclusive and just transition toward a circular economy.

33. On behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, Ms. Oranuj Lorphensri, Deputy Permanent Secretary, delivered the high-level statement. She extends gratitude to the people and Government of India for their hospitality and to the Secretariat for its diligent preparations. Thailand has transitioned from conventional waste disposal methods like open dumping and incineration to modern, sustainable waste management practices over the past decade, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and aligning with international environmental standards. The government has implemented various action plans to address waste and plastic management while balancing socio-economic development and environmental sustainability. As a flagship policy, the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) economic model integrates environmental considerations within a circular economy framework. Thailand is focused on systematic solid waste management through a lifecycle approach, from sustainable production to responsible disposal, transforming waste into valuable resources by applying eco-design principles, reducing plastic use, promoting recycling, and enhancing energy recovery and composting initiatives. The second phase of the Plastic Waste Management Action Plan sets ambitious targets for sustainable plastic waste management. Thailand supports regional and global initiatives like the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution while working with the private sector to strengthen sustainable packaging and recycling through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

VI. Plenary Sessions

34. **Plenary Session 2**: **3R and Circular Economy Towards Resilient, Low-carbon and Sustainable Cities and Communities** examined governance, industry collaboration, and technological innovation in resource management. The session discussed challenges, opportunities, strategies, partnerships and examined the interlinkages between circular economy and sustainable cities towards achieving SDG 11 (to make cities and communities safe, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient). The world faces triple planetary challenges—climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. A circular economy presents a potential solution, enabling resource efficiency and sustainability. By 2050, India, for instance, is projected to generate $3 trillion through the recycling industry and also expects to create 10 million jobs in waste management, recycling, and resource recovery. Australia's experience highlighted best practices and strategies for implementing circular economy policies effectively Key drivers for transitioning from a linear to a circular model include policy and regulations, capacity-building, technology, and public participation. While regulations can drive change, financial investments are crucial to ensure effective implementation. Collaborative efforts across sectors are essential to achieve a resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable future. Expanding circular economy initiatives requires local adaptation, supported by international cooperation. Cities are at the forefront of climate action and sustainability, serving as the most effective ecosystems to drive transformative changes. Cities are agile and have greater potential than nations to implement impactful circular economy solutions. Cities play a pivotal role in minimizing waste, improving resource efficiency, and promoting sustainable production and

consumption. Digital platforms, AI, and monitoring tools can improve regulatory compliance, while targeted incentives can boost circular business models. Japan's Eco-Town initiative integrates local governments, enterprises, and citizens, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive model with an objective to balance environmental sustainability with economic and social benefits. Currently, 26 towns across Japan have been designated as Eco-Towns. Kitakyushu Eco-Town is the first and largest recycling complex in Japan, setting a benchmark for circular economy practices. Another Japanese City, Zama City, has been implementing the Food Cycle Project (FCP), a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at reducing food waste and promoting circularity within the city. The system ensures that food waste is collected, processed, and reintegrated into the local agricultural sector. A case of Denmark, Marselisborg Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), that follows a circular approach to wastewater treatment, focusing on resource recovery, energy positive and sustainability was also shared in the session. This session further explored the challenges, needs, opportunities, and actions required to accelerate circularity. To provide diverse insights, the panel brought together representatives from governments, cities, and businesses, highlighting the collaborative efforts needed to build a resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable urban system.

35. The intervention from All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG) underscored the challenges that persist across water, plastics, solid waste, and urban forestry. While tree-related issues have largely been addressed through India's Tree Conservation Act, water management requires context-specific solutions to ensure long-term sustainability. The choice between freshwater, recycled water, or desalinated water must be based on local conditions and financial viability, varying from ULB to ULB (urban local bodies). Similarly, few resorts in Maldives have organic waste management equipment that produces biogas to generate electricity for running certain components of these resorts.

36. **Plenary Session 3**: **Circular Economy Policies -Translating Global Vision into Local Actions** addressed scaling circular economy efforts and linking global strategies with local action. The plenary session noted, among others, plastic pollution as a major environmental issue, with millions of tons of plastic waste accumulating in landfills, rivers, and oceans, harming wildlife and ecosystems. Due to its non-biodegradable nature, plastic persists for centuries, breaking down into microplastics that contaminate water, soil, and even food chains, posing risks to human health. Challenges such as inefficient collection systems, lack of awareness, and high costs hinder effective recycling. Many plastics are difficult to recycle due to contamination or mixed compositions, leading to limited reuse. The World Bank supports circularity through user-pay models, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), carbon finance, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). As a major player in this sector, the WB has invested over $3.1 billion across 90 international projects since 2014. With global waste expected to rise by 73% by 2050, effective waste management is critical. The WB aims to lessen waste impacts and extract value from waste materials. Discussions underscored WB's financial backing, policy initiatives, and successes in long-term waste management projects. While promoting circularity is vital, it must be supported by robust systems for waste collection, transfer, and processing to reduce

environmental damage and facilitate recycling efforts. Financial limitations and weak infrastructure slow progress, underscoring the importance of finding ways to monetize the waste. EU regulations focus on reducing material consumption while maintaining growth. Sustainable product and material design, reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling were discussed. ASEAN's 2021 circular economy framework was presented, with priorities on resilience, resource efficiency, and sustainable finance.

37. Additionally, the achievements and perspectives of the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE), along with Japan's experience within the Alliance, were presented by the representative of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan. GACERE is a global alliance of 16+ EU member nations, 5 strategic partners and 3 regional networks collaborating to advance a just circular economy and promote sustainable natural resource management in political and multilateral forums. It aims to showcase the circular economy's role in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

38. Similarly, Japan has made significant strides toward a circular economy through a series of legislative and regulatory frameworks. These efforts span from early initiatives like the Basic Environment Act (1994) to key policies such as the Basic Act for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society and the Green Purchasing Act, both enforced in 2001. The country continues to advance its commitment, with the latest development being the Advancement of Recycling Business Act, in May 2024. In the same year, the Ministerial Council on Circular Economy was established for the realization of circular economy as a national strategy and ensuring that the government carries out the strategy in a well-planned and integrated manner. Japan's 5th Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, approved on August 2, 2024, outlines the country's resource circulation and waste management strategy for the next five years. The plan aims to accelerate the transition to a circular economy, supporting net-zero and nature-positive goals, enhancing industrial competitiveness, promoting circular businesses, fostering local revitalization, and ensuring economic security. Building on initiatives like GACERE and Japan's strategic efforts, the session urged countries to enhance multilateral cooperation, integrate circular economy principles into national policies, and drive innovation in sustainable resource management.

39. This session also discussed the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Similarly, the OECD has provided key recommendations, influencing cities like Groningen, which integrated the principles of circular economy into political strategies; Valladolid, which developed a local circular economy plan; Umeå, which implemented Green Public Procurement (GPP); and Glasgow, which created a circular economy route map based on OECD insights.

40. The session underscored that a successful circular economy requires managing assets—natural, human, cultural, manufactured, and financial—while addressing key resources like water and labor. Tackling the synthetic waste legacy of the Anthropocene involves closing three loops: extending the lifespan of infrastructure and products, maintaining material purity through efficient recycling, and ensuring

producer responsibility for waste. Advancing circular economy in cities requires integrated governance models linking all administrative levels and strong legal frameworks for urban planning. Large-scale circular economy investment can be driven by public-private partnerships (PPPs) and climate finance mechanisms.

41. **Plenary Session 4**: **Introduction on "New Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy – Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society in Asia and the Pacific (2025-2035)"**, reviewed the progress made under the Hanoi 3R Declaration (2013-2023), which was adopted at 4th Forum hosted by the Government of Viet Nam in 2013 and was the first unprecedented voluntary commitment of Asia-Pacific countries in moving towards a more resource efficient and circular society. The session introduced further the Zero Draft "*Jaipur 3R and Circular Economy Declaration (2025-2035) - Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society in Asia and the Pacific*", which aims to act as a policy guiding framework and catalyst for countries to facilitate integration of sustainable consumption and production practices as well as circular economy principles into their overall policy, planning and development, including infrastructure development. Further the Jaipur 3R Declaration aims to act as a catalyst for transformational changes in resource and waste management in Asia-Pacific. This would include enabling changes to policies, institutional frameworks, financing models, data management approaches, and the implementation of various technologies towards achieving circular and zero-waste societies. It also aims to catalyze multi-layer cooperation and partnerships in advancing collaborative actions towards achieving the SDGs and other international agreements such as the Paris Agreement on climate change, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, among others. Discussions focused on balancing economic growth with sustainability. The transition from a technological to an integrated circular economy model was discussed, reflected in the shift from the Hanoi Declaration to the Jaipur Declaration. The draft declaration includes resource efficiency, circularity in various sectors, resilient economies and communities, and environmental sustainability, with special focus on pollution control and informal sector inclusion. Implementation strategies were discussed, including knowledge-sharing, financing mechanisms, and integrating traditional knowledge systems, among others.

VII. Keynote Address 2

42. Delivering a keynote speech on "Material Flows, Waste, GHG Emissions and Circularity, Dr. Heinz Schandl, Senior Scientist, CSIRO, Australia, focused on the urgent need for a circular economy to address global environmental crises caused by unsustainable resource consumption. Over 90 percent of biodiversity loss and nearly half of greenhouse gas emissions stem from resource extraction and processing. Material use has quadrupled in the last 50 years, yet less than 10 percent is recycled, presenting a significant opportunity for change. High-income nations consume six times more materials and generate ten times the climate impact of lower-income countries,

underscoring the need for equitable responsibility. The discussion emphasized that circular business models can create jobs, drive innovation, and reduce waste, but challenges persist, including reliance on linear consumption, lack of data, and insufficient infrastructure. Recommendations included incentivizing sustainable business practices, investing in resource-efficient technologies, integrating AI and automation into waste management, and strengthening global cooperation. The session concluded with a call to action, urging policymakers, businesses, and researchers to implement systemic changes that align economic growth with environmental sustainability.

VIII. Plenary Session 5: Nature-based Solutions and Circular Economy

43. The plenary session examined the integration of nature-based solutions (NbS) in government initiatives such as India's Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) and its shift towards ODF+ rural areas, while also addressing the impact of partnerships and financial support in advancing circular economy investments. Practical applications of NbS, including landfill leachate management in Kiribati, biomass-based masks as an alternative to plastic, and AIIB's financing approach to integrating circular economy principles, were explored. Policy measures such as tax incentives, public-private partnerships, and knowledge-sharing were highlighted as key strategies for scaling NbS, along with the role of technology and behavior change in ensuring successful circular economy transitions. The need for systemic changes was highlighted, with a focus on integrating NbS into policies, enhancing financial mechanisms, and restructuring economic systems to account for the true cost of waste. The presentation by IUCN underscored that working with nature through effective Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can significantly improve Biodiversity, Climate Change, Resilience and Health outcomes to achieve the SDGs. The estimated global benefits in ecosystem services from NbS focused on climate amounts to US$ 170 billion, and NbS can contribute to meeting 37% of climate mitigation towards the Paris climate goal. Effective planning and management of NbS require going beyond National administrative boundaries but focus on collaborative, cross sectoral and transboundary response to challenges.

IX. Special Session by the Government of India

44. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) of the Government of India shared that Memorandum of Understandings were signed with 18 cities and 21 states to strengthen solid waste management efforts. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) reaffirmed its support for circular economy initiatives in India, focusing on waste-to-energy projects, digitalized waste management, and sustainable urban infrastructure. Investments in bio-CNG and bamboo-based low-carbon construction were presented as key priorities. The Government's Urban Challenge Fund, with ADB and the World Bank, aims to attract private investment in circular economy solutions. The importance of a digital platform, C-3 (Cities Coalition for Circularity), for collaboration and knowledge exchange was highlighted. The challenges of urbanization and waste

generation were emphasized, with flagship programmes like Swachh Bharat Mission, AMRUT, and Smart Cities Mission integrating circular economy principles. The 4P strategy—political leadership, public financing, partnerships, and people's participation—was noted as key to waste management transformation. Policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and India's leadership in the International Solar Alliance were highlighted. Circularity was framed as a life model under "Mission LiFE." Waste-to-wealth principles, recycling industries, and a potential US$2 trillion circular economy market by 2050 were discussed.

45. **Keynote Address 3**: The Special Session was concluded with a keynote address by Hon. Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. India's initiatives, including bans on single-use plastics, Eco Mark rules, and action plans for ten waste categories, were outlined. The transition to circularity was described as a historic transformation comparable to the Industrial Revolution, with an estimated economic potential of US$4.5 trillion by 2030. Policy interventions in e-waste, plastics, and construction were emphasized. The integration of 3R principles across industries and urban planning was stressed. Circular economy principles were linked to India's cultural ethos, with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam highlighting sustainability's interconnectedness. The Jaipur Declaration was positioned as a milestone for policy innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration. The role of local entrepreneurship in driving sustainability was highlighted. India's recycling industry, with 3,500 units processing 45 million metric tonnes annually, was presented as a model for Asia-Pacific cooperation. The necessity of integrating sustainability into economic progress was underscored, concluding with a call for collective action to accelerate circular economy transformation. Andhra Pradesh's commitment to Swachh Andhra by 2047 was outlined, incorporating waste-to-energy projects and data-driven sanitation initiatives. The forum's agenda of plenary discussions, and case study exchanges was reiterated. The session concluded with a focus on partnerships, knowledge exchange, and the role of circular economy practices in sustainable urbanization.

X. Country Breakout Sessions on Major Initiatives and Achievements

46. **Country Breakout Group 1:** Examined key initiatives by various nations, including integrated waste management policies in Solomon Islands, research-driven recycling projects in Australia, and legislative measures in Bangladesh to regulate plastic and e-waste. India's shift toward a circular economy was outlined through policies on resource efficiency and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), while Vietnam's structured approach to EPR, green financing, and waste separation was detailed. Major barriers were identified, including infrastructure gaps, financial constraints, and the need for stronger policy enforcement. Cross-border cooperation, technological advancements, and knowledge-sharing to accelerate global 3R implementation, were discussed.

47. **Country Breakout Group 2:** Focused on the progress and challenges in solid waste management across Pacific Nations. Key initiatives included policy actions, recycling

programs, and community-led waste reduction efforts. The transition of the Cook Islands to a five-R waste strategy and its partnerships for waste export were highlighted. In Fiji, the ban on single-use plastics, recycling initiatives, and planned e-waste collection were emphasized. The container deposit system for lead-acid batteries in Kiribati was detailed, while landfill management and recycling regulations in Palau were discussed. Efforts undertaken by Tuvalu to manage waste despite constraints related to land and infrastructure were outlined. Common challenges, including geographical limitations, funding shortages, and the need for improved coordination, were acknowledged. Proposed solutions included the expansion of regional collaborations, enhancement of infrastructure, strengthening of policies, and greater community participation. The discussions reflected the ongoing commitment of Pacific nations to the development of long-term, sustainable waste management strategies despite resource limitations.

48. **Country Breakout Group 3:** Discussed the progress and challenges in Cambodia, Malaysia, Tonga, and Vanuatu in implementing 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and circular economy strategies. In Cambodia, strong legal frameworks have been established, public-private partnerships have been initiated, and community waste management campaigns have been launched, with ongoing efforts directed toward increasing awareness, securing funding, and advancing technological innovation. In Malaysia, the circular economy is being integrated into national policies, supported by a circular economy blueprint and the National Circular Economy Council, while measures are being taken to improve waste segregation and reduce landfill dependency. In Tonga, corporate and international partnerships have been formed to support recycling and landfill rehabilitation, governance has been strengthened, and infrastructure expansion is being pursued. In Vanuatu, where a ban on single-use plastics was pioneered, eco-friendly packaging, community-led recycling, and traditional sustainability practices are being promoted, with continuous efforts to develop infrastructure and expand waste management solutions. Global partnerships are being utilized by the island nations to further sustainable waste initiatives and strengthen institutional capacities.

49. **Country Breakout Group 4:** Discussed initiative in Bhutan, where carbon negativity is maintained, circularity has been integrated with the Gross National Happiness (GNH) philosophy, with efforts directed towards Zero Waste Bhutan, green businesses, and waste-to-resource innovations. In the Maldives, where geographic challenges and import dependency persist, single-use plastics have been successfully phased out, while advancements in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and decentralized waste processing continue. In Mongolia, where urbanization and rising waste generation are being addressed, emphasis has been placed on policy support, public awareness, and private sector engagement, though investment constraints remain a challenge. In Nepal, where strong policies for 3R and solid waste management are in place, municipal-led waste segregation, recycling, and community-driven initiatives have been successfully implemented. Across all countries, policy development, financial support, technological innovation, and citizen engagement have been identified as key factors driving a sustainable transition to a circular economy.

50. **Country Breakout Group 5:** Waste management initiatives and circular economy integration in Thailand, Japan, Laos, and Sri Lanka were discussed. Thailand is developing guidelines for recyclable packaging and enforcing EPR laws, addressing regulatory gaps and consumer behavior. Japan's Resource Circulation Enhancement Act promotes eco-friendly design, recycling, and international cooperation. Laos classifies waste into hazardous and general categories, encouraging recycling but facing enforcement and resource challenges. Sri Lanka's National Environment Policy 2020 includes the 3R concept, though recycling remains low at 11 percent. The need for education, public participation, and legal inclusion of marginalized waste pickers was emphasized, with private sector and youth involvement seen as key to tackling plastic waste.

XI. Technical Site Visit to Waste-to-Energy, Sewage Treatment Plant and Heritage Sites in Jaipur, Rajasthan

51. A total of 229 participants were taken on a four-hour site visit covering key locations in Jaipur, Rajasthan, beginning with the Sewage Treatment Plant at Dehlawas, followed by the Waste-to-Energy Plant at Langadiyawas, and concluding with a tour of Jaipur's heritage sites. Insights into wastewater management and its role in sustainability were provided at Dehlawas, while an understanding of waste-to-energy conversion and its environmental benefits was gained at Langadiyawas. Jaipur's historical and architectural significance was then explored. Discussions on circularity technology and sustainability in heritage conservation took place, combining technical learning with cultural appreciation to raise awareness about sustainable urban development and the city's legacy.

XII. Keynote Address 4

52. In his keynote address on the title of "*Circular economy in the context of urban resilience ~ Implication towards SDG 11*", Prof. Seeram Ramakrishna, National University of Singapore highlighted the crucial link between the circular economy and urban resilience, emphasizing its role in achieving SDG 11 — making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Using Singapore as a model, Prof. Seeram showcased how the city-state integrates circular practices into its urban planning through initiatives like the Green Plan, Deep Tunnel Sewerage System, and Jurong Island's circular chemical hub. These efforts address waste-to-energy solutions, water circularity, and sustainable management of industrial, domestic, and electronic waste. Policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), green bonds, carbon taxes, and public-private partnerships (PPP) support Singapore's transition towards a Zero Waste society. The "20-minute towns" and "45-minute city" strategies further enhance urban liveability by promoting accessibility and green transportation, underpinned by the adoption of ISO 59000 standards for measuring and improving circularity performance.

53. He emphasized that technology and finance play integral roles in advancing the circular economy. AI-driven data collection, sensor-based tracking, and real-time

waste monitoring improve efficiency. Financially, Singapore has issued long-term green bonds, including a 34-year sustainability bond, to fund environmental projects. A phased increase in carbon taxes and carbon offset agreements with over 30 countries has strengthened Singapore's carbon reduction efforts. Asia, led by countries like Singapore, India, and Japan, is driving forward with sustainable solutions and innovative R&D programs, such as Singapore's "Cities of Tomorrow" initiative. Prof. Seeram further emphasized that collective efforts like the Jaipur Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy, reinforcing the need for collaboration and innovation to build resilient urban futures and make the planet count on us.

XIII. Plenary Session 6: Launch of Reports

54. During this session, two important reports were launched: The Secrets to Unlocking the Next Frontier for a Circular Economy in the Asia-Pacific Region by UN ESCAP, and The Second State of the 3Rs in Asia and the Pacific – Advancing Circular Economy in Asia and the Pacific Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), initiated by UNCRD.

55. Dr. Rupa Chanda, Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation Division at UN ESCAP, emphasized the organization's critical role in advancing circular economic initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region. She further highlighted the ESCAP Sustainable Business Network's focus on private sector sustainability and the Asia-Pacific Green Deal for Business, which proposes financing mechanisms for green energy and circular economy innovations. Moving forward, she called for enhanced collaboration, capacity building, evidence-based research, and greater private sector engagement to support circular economy transitions and scale solutions globally.

56. The UN ESCAP report on the Secrets to Unlocking the Next Frontier for a Circular Economy in the Asia-Pacific Region outlines the landscape of the circular economy in the Asia-Pacific region. The report underscores the importance of business leadership and strengthened collaboration between governments and private entities to move from policy to action. It identifies five key roles for policy mechanisms to support the circular economy, emphasizing the need for scaling, sharing, and cooperation to maximize its impact on achieving the SDGs. ESCAP report reveals that progress toward the SDG is currently insufficient, and CE presents a critical opportunity to leverage partnerships and resources for achieving these targets. While policies are in place, effective implementation depends on fostering collaboration and developing actionable strategies to turn these policies into tangible results, and the crucial role of partnerships and collaboration among governments, the private sector, and businesses across the Asia-Pacific region is essential for driving innovation and scaling CE solutions.

57. The "2nd State of the 3Rs in Asia and the Pacific", an expert's assessment report, initiated by UNCRD, provides an expert assessment of the circular economy to guide policies and actions for the 2030 agenda. The report examines challenges and opportunities in circular economy practices, focusing on waste from plastics, electronics, construction, healthcare, and wastewater. It highlights innovative

technologies and case studies, such as using tyres for road construction and managing end-of-life batteries. Additionally, the report assesses country progress on the Hanoi Declaration's 33 goals, with India, Thailand, P.R. China, and Vietnam making significant strides in 3R and circular economy implementation. The report further outlines the state of the circular economy in the Asia-Pacific region, serving as an expert assessment and providing valuable technical input for policy initiatives. This report, a culmination of years of dedicated effort, is a guiding tool for aligning policies and actions with the 2030 Agenda, aiming to establish a strong foundation for a circular economy and a sustainable future in the region. The full report could be accessed at https://uncrd.un.org/sites/uncrd.un.org//files/report_2nd-state-of-the-3rs-in-asia-and-the-pacific_final.pdf

XIV. Special Session by the Government of India

58. **Special Address**: Delivering special address, Prof. Amit Kapoor, Chair, Institute for Competitiveness, University of Stanford mentioned that implementing circularity of solid and liquid waste for a large religious congregation (Maha-Kumbh) held in Prayagraj, India, from January 13 to February 26, 2025. As a case study in large-scale urban planning, crowd management, and waste management. Approximately 4,000 hectares were designated, divided into 25 sectors, and structured in a grid layout. Challenges such as delayed river subsidence and heavy monsoons impacted land availability, necessitating strategic reclamation efforts. However, the success of the initiative was attributed to well-planned physical infrastructure and efficient crowd movement management. With an estimated 50 crore visitors, sanitation and waste management were critical, with 1.5 crore people requiring facilities daily. The discussion brought to attention a 99.9 percent sanitation standard, supported by 150,000 toilets cleaned every 20 minutes. Field studies verified these efforts, highlighting sanitation workers as key contributors. Despite extensive planning, isolated sludge accumulation incidents occurred due to an influx of seven crore people. However, as the discussion revealed, swift cleaning operations restored hygiene standards. Waste disposal processes were systematically managed, with fecal waste transported to treatment plants using real-time indicators, while drinking water access was improved by removing the one-rupee coin requirement. Environmental benefits were recognised, with a circular economy approach ensuring waste minimisation and resource efficiency. This event highlighted the importance of planning, decentralized governance, and private sector involvement for managing high-density events. This large-scale operation provided invaluable lessons in urban planning, crowd management, and decentralized governance. Recognized as a global model for managing high-density events, it set a benchmark for other cities.

59. **Keynote Address 5**: In her key address, Ms. Roopa Mishra, Joint Secretary, SBM-U, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) mentioned that the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a transformative national initiative aimed at achieving comprehensive sanitation and waste management across India. Rooted in the country's long-standing culture of sustainability, the mission was revitalized in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking a shift from government-driven efforts to

a collective movement. SBM focuses on public participation, enterprise development, and technological innovation, recognizing the diversity of India's population and the need for localized solutions.

60. The mission's success hinges on political leadership, financial support, partnerships, and community engagement, with active involvement from NGOs, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and civil society. The mission achieved significant milestones, including the completion of an open-defecation-free (ODF) India by 2019, and later moved toward ODF++ and garbage-free cities, emphasizing waste-to-wealth initiatives and resource optimization. A structured waste collection system involving 250,000 vehicles operates daily across the country, ensuring efficient waste management. SBM also advanced scientific waste management through material recovery facilities, waste-to-energy plants, and e-waste management.

61. Special focus was placed on rehabilitating legacy dumpsites, promoting women-led enterprises in waste management, and integrating social welfare programs for sanitation workers. The mission's behavioral change aspect has evolved into the world's largest public movement, with widespread participation from all societal segments. The initiative has been supported by digital innovations, financial incentives for startups, and the annual Swachh Survekshan competition, which promotes continuous improvement. By 2026, SBM aims for 100% ODF++ coverage and to achieve a three-star rating for scientific waste processing in all cities. International recognition of SBM highlights its role in improving public health, economic growth, and employment, driving India toward a cleaner and more sustainable future.

XV. Thematic Roundtable Dialogues

62. **Parallel Roundtable 1: Circular Economy and Electric and Electronic Waste**: The round-table emphasized the challenge of increasing volumes of electronic waste being generated across the region and the need for country and region specific policies, regulations and resources to manage electronic waste. Participants noted that countries in the Asia Pacific were at different stages of maturity in the development of electronic waste policies, and there were opportunities to promote regional cooperation, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to share best practices and learnings. The round-table underscored the challenges facing small-island developing states in managing electronic waste and end-of-life vehicles, which had to be transported off the islands as scrap due to limited storage space and lack of recycling capacity. Participants also heard of the challenges of shipping electronic waste which may also be classified as hazardous waste, as a result of international conventions governing the transport of cross-border hazardous waste. They highlighted the need for simplifying cross-border transport procedures for hazardous materials.

63. **Parallel Roundtable 2: Circular Economy and Plastic Waste**: The session highlighted the transformative potential of adopting a circular economy framework in Pacific Island Countries. It introduced projects such as the Pacific Ocean Litter Project, which

focuses on promoting sustainable financing systems, organic waste management, and the establishment of recycling hubs. The roundtable underscored the key challenges including the widespread use of single-use plastics, inadequate recycling infrastructure, and economic inefficiencies such as high logistics and energy costs. Additionally, the significant role of the informal sector in plastic waste collection was noted, as it creates market distortions for formal recyclers. The absence of "design for recycling" standards further complicates effective waste management. This can be addressed by establishing standards for the circular design of plastic products within the internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution currently under negotiation, as highlighted by GACERE's work. The session showcased innovative approaches by WASTE to move beyond traditional recycling methods towards holistic waste management systems, particularly focusing on plastics. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks were emphasized as crucial, holding manufacturers accountable for the entire lifecycle of their products.

64. **Parallel Round Table 3: Circular Economy and Textile and Fashion Industry:** The drivers of change towards circularity within the textile and fashion industry are legislation, investments and education. On legislation, most of the new upcoming policies come from the Global North. Asia is in a power position (biggest consumer market, biggest production region), and needs to step-up to drive legislation, especially focusing on strong cross-country collaborative legislation. To be able implement policies effectively, we need investments; according to BCG and Fashion For Good, about $20 billion to $30 billion in financing per year. The investment must go towards hard tech (i.e., machinery) for: sorting & identification technologies, R&D on fibre separation and for manufacturers support in implementing textile to textile recycling plants. There is a gap between future demands in recycled fiber and what we are currently able to supply - investments will support closing that gap. Finally, governments academia and the private sector need to push education of the current and future workforce of product creation teams. Circularity starts with designing which dictates if and how the products can be recovered, and better resource management. Fashion stakeholders have already started the work. India is the largest textile recycling hub in Asia - and is currently formalizing the material recovery sector. It is still facing challenges around the quality of the outputs and how the sector can build financially sustainable businesses. Other examples have highlighted other small drivers for circularity: cross industry dialogue has been valuable in recovering materials effectively, facilitating consumer participation through systems for repair and take back programs.

65. **Parallel Roundtable 4: Circular Economy and Construction Industry:** The roundtable session discussed the challenges and opportunities for the circularity of the construction materials, providing insights into energy efficiency in buildings, recycling and alternative construction materials. The presentations and discussions dived into ways to contribute to circular economy in cement and concrete industry, ways to establish collaboration mechanisms in support to the system of construction circularity, use of different types of industrial material, geopolymer, low cement concrete, or wastes for blended cement, using wastes from steel, aluminum, fly-ashes, gypsum, uranium, limestone, while giving priority to locally available materials and

workers. Process towards circularity requires energy efficiency and environmentally friendly practices, efficient design for long term use, carefully considering the lifecycle and value chain of sector and products, as well as people safety and engagement. Challenging but rewarding requires all stakeholders to work together, with major role for cities and local communities, suitable urban planning, building codes, waste management and green public procurement.

66. **Parallel Roundtable 5: Circular Economy and Biomass Waste:** The roundtable on Circular Economy and Biomass Waste explored the potential of organic farming and biomass utilization for sustainability. Participants discussed governmental efforts to promote organic farming through traditional, scientifically backed methods, focusing on crop residue management, compost, and biofertilizers for improved soil health and pollution reduction. Diverse biomass conversion methods were examined, including physical, biological, thermo-chemical, and biochemical processes, with a focus on biogas energy and its cost-effective carbon sequestration. The rapid growth of the biomass market was acknowledged, alongside concerns about environmental impacts like land use and deforestation, and the "fuel vs. food" debate. The panel discussion addressed governmental support for biomass waste development, citing examples of home composting initiatives, training programs, and the importance of inclusive participation, especially involving women's groups. Participants emphasized the necessity of technology, such as biogas systems, to transform waste into valuable products. They stressed that a successful circular economy requires a holistic approach, considering systems, processes, and the specific context of cities and countries. The session concluded by underscoring the critical role of behavioral change and capacity building to institutionalize circular economy practices, affirming that biomass is a key resource for converting waste into biofuels, biogas, and fertilizers, reducing reliance on traditional waste disposal.

67. **Parallel Roundtable 6: Circular Economy and Freshwater Resources:** The session revolved around promoting circularity in both fresh water and used water management. Presentations highlighted the progress and impact of the Namami Gange Programme and emphasized a holistic approach to waste-water management at local, national, and global levels. Participants discussed the importance of the 5 pillars of Namami Gange: Nirmal Ganga (Clean Ganga), Aviral Ganga (Uninterrupted Ganga), Jan Ganga (People's Ganga), Gyan Ganga (Knowledge Ganga), and Arth Ganga (Economic Ganga), each addressing a different theme. The session also showcased national and global case studies on used water management. Challenges were identified, including the extent of urbanization, availability of infrastructure, finance, awareness, and data management. The session concluded with recommendations to strike a balance between the different aspects of circularity in fresh water, generate credible data, utilize nature-based solutions (NbS), and promote circularity among all stakeholders.

XVI. Plenary Session 8: Greening SMEs Towards Circular Society (SDG 9) Including the Role of PPP (Public-Private Partnership)

68. The plenary session discusses challenges and barriers, opportunities and drivers for eco-innovations, smart and digital technologies, establishment of PPP, incentivizing and enabling collaborations with the private sector in general and the SMEs in particular in the transition towards circularity and sustainability. The presentations and discussions dived into the need for industries, in particular at incubation stage, then following on replication, multiplier, accelerator and scaling up for needed impact, while considering needed enabling factors, government rules, business rationale, tech skills, culture and social dialogues. Being the backbone of the economy, MSMES, leaders in innovation, need due consideration in the policy frameworks, tailored support by the government, the market and finance system. To that end, public procurement policies that factor in the needs of the MSMES are necessary, while providing opportunities for networking, cross-learning, opportunities for advocacy and raising their Voice. MSMEs are the major and key partners in the transition to circularity and sustainability.

XVII. Plenary Session 9: Discussion and Adoption of the Jaipur Declaration

69. At the High-Level 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific, with the theme of *'Realizing Circular Societies Towards Achieving SDGs and Carbon Neutrality,'* the Jaipur Declaration on *"3R and Circular Economy ~ Sustainable 3R and Circular Economy Goals for Achieving Resource Efficient, Clean, Resilient, Sound Material Cycle and Low-Carbon Society in Asia and the Pacific (2025-2035)"* was unanimously adopted by the Asia and Pacific countries. A guiding document has been prepared to suggest indicative strategies to countries as per national policies, circumstances and capabilities. A collaborative knowledge platform C-3 has also been agreed upon on this day - 5th March 2025" .

XVIII. Way Forward

70. The path forward for realizing circular societies in the Asia-Pacific region is multifaceted and requires cooperation across governments, industries, and communities. The region's rapid urbanization, growing population, and environmental challenges make it an ideal context for the implementation of circular economy principles. By aligning circularity with SDGs, the Asia-Pacific region can set an example for other regions to follow in fostering a sustainable and resilient future for all. This approach involves shifting from traditional linear economies—where resources are extracted, used, and discarded—to circular economies where resources are kept in use for as long as possible. By creating closed-loop systems, circularity minimizes waste, reduces environmental impact, and fosters sustainable development.

71. The countries and stakeholders could look into the outlined elements for advancing circular societies in the Asia-Pacific region in line with the objectives of the Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035):

a. Policy and Governance Frameworks

i. Government Support: Strong regulatory frameworks are essential to promote circular economy principles. Governments can provide tax incentives, grants, and subsidies for circular practices, such as waste recycling, renewable energy projects, and sustainable product design;

ii. Clear Regulations on Waste Management and Resource Recovery: Enforcing policies that ensure better waste segregation, recycling, and extended producer responsibility (EPR) is essential for reducing resource consumption and waste generation;

iii. Cross-Border Collaboration and Networking: Regional collaboration across Asia-Pacific countries to harmonize policies, share best practices, and develop common standards can accelerate the transition to a circular economy; To support the implementation of the Jaipur Declaration, the local and national governments can help in: (a) sharing knowledge and best practices; (b) developing and implementing capacity building programs; (c) where relevant, in developing and implementing pilot programs and projects and; (d) in reaching out to the multilateral and bilateral development communities and donors to assist them to align their capacity building, technical and financial assistance in Asia-Pacific with the objectives of the Jaipur Declaration. To enhance collaborations between cities in Asia and Pacific countries and beyond to further promote exchange of best practices, lessons and technical know-how in areas of 3R and Circular Economy, "Cities Coalition for Circularity (C-3)" could be formed as a collaborative and partnership platform or mechanism to accelerate implementation of Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035).

b. Business Innovation and Collaboration

i. Incentivizing Circular Business Models: Governments and businesses need to invest in circular business models, such as product-as-a-service, sharing economies, and remanufacturing. Large corporations and SMEs alike should integrate circularity into their value chains;

ii. Public-Private Partnerships: Encouraging collaboration between governments, private sectors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can foster innovation and investments in circular economy solutions, especially in waste management, recycling, and renewable energy;

iii. R&D Investment: Funding research into materials science, energy-efficient processes, and technologies like recycling, upcycling, and biotechnologies is crucial for scaling up circular practices;

c. Sustainable Product Design and Consumption

i. Eco-Design and Sustainable Manufacturing: Businesses need to embrace product design principles that prioritize longevity, reparability, and recyclability. Sustainable product manufacturing can reduce the demand for virgin resources and encourage a shift to low-carbon production;

ii. Consumer Education: Awareness campaigns should focus on responsible consumption, the environmental impact of products, and the importance of recycling and reusing goods. Informed consumers can drive demand for sustainable and circular products;

d. Infrastructure Development

i. Circular Supply Chains: Asia-Pacific countries need to invest in infrastructure that supports circular supply chains—such as recycling facilities, reverse logistics systems, and digital platforms for product tracking and reuse;
ii. Waste-to-Energy and Resource Recovery Facilities: Developing advanced waste-to-energy and resource recovery technologies can help reduce carbon emissions while also addressing growing waste management challenges in urban areas;
iii. Digitalization and Data Sharing: The use of digital tools, such as blockchain, for tracking materials, products, and waste can help ensure transparency and efficiency in circular economies;

e. Empowering Communities and Stakeholders

i. Inclusive and Decentralized Approaches: Circular economy initiatives should include marginalized communities and small enterprises. Localized recycling programs, upcycling projects, and small-scale waste management solutions should be promoted to ensure social inclusion;
ii. Capacity Building and Education: Training programs for businesses and local authorities on circular economy principles, green technologies, and sustainable practices are necessary to build expertise and drive change;
iii. Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging diverse stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs, and international organizations, is key to ensuring a balanced approach to sustainability;

f. Integration with SDGs and Climate Goals

i. Synergies Between Circular Economy and SDGs: Circular economy models can directly contribute to various SDGs, such as responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), climate action (SDG 13), and decent work and economic growth (SDG 8). Policymakers need to explicitly align circularity with these broader SDG targets;
ii. Carbon Footprint Reduction: Circular practices like recycling, sustainable material sourcing, and reducing energy consumption can play a significant role in lowering the environmental impact of the region.
iii. Climate-Resilient Development: Circular economies also promote the efficient use of resources and reduce waste, contributing to building resilience against climate change impacts, particularly in vulnerable regions of Asia-Pacific;
iv. Nature Based Solutions (NbS): Biodiversity is the strongest natural defense against climate change. Thus, member countries of the 3R Forum can unlock valuable social and economic opportunities by integrating circular economy approaches with efforts that protect and restore natural systems. This includes

adopting nature-based solutions and strengthening natural infrastructure as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), ensuring resilience and sustainability across sectors.

g. Financing Circular Economy Initiatives

i. Access to Green Finance: To support the transition to a circular economy, financial institutions must increase investments in circular business models. This can be done through green bonds, loans for sustainable projects, or venture capital for green start-ups.

ii. Public Investment in Infrastructure: Circular infrastructure—such as recycling facilities, waste-to-energy plants, and sustainable transport networks—presents a compelling investment opportunity for long-term environmental and economic returns. Strategic collaboration among governments, private investors, and funding institutions can unlock capital flows toward scalable, resilient systems.

h. Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability

i. Data-Driven Decision Making: Regular monitoring and reporting on circular economy progress at the regional and national level can help policymakers track success, identify gaps, and adjust policies.

ii. Indicators for Circular Economy: Establishing clear metrics and indicators for measuring the success of circular economy initiatives—such as material recovery rates or waste diversion rates—can drive accountability and help improve practices.

XIX. Closing Session

72. The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, (MoHUA), the Government of India for hosting the Forum and extended special thanks to Honorable Minister of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, (MoHUA) and his team. UNCRD acknowledged the NIUA team for their valuable support in preparing the session summaries. Appreciation was also extended to the Jaipur City Government, the Rajasthan State Government, and the staffs of Rajasthan International Center (RIC) for their support in ensuring the event's success. UNCRD further acknowledged the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan, for its continued financial support in organizing the Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific since its inception in 2009. Highlighting the outcomes of the event, the UNCRD emphasized that the Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035), a product of constructive discussions, provides a comprehensive roadmap for action over the next decade, including opportunities for sustainability and innovation. UNCRD reiterated that the responsibility for implementing the Declaration through concrete actions and measures should be shared by all stakeholders, including civil society organizations to individual citizens.

73. The representative from UN ESCAP appreciated the forum's role in uniting diverse voices from the Asia-Pacific region to foster collaboration and shared learning. The

importance of tailoring regional 3R and Circular Economy (CE) strategies to national contexts, advocating for a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to ensure inclusive policy implementation was emphasized. Highlighting the need to advance circular economy initiatives, the countries were called for effective strategies at all levels of government, supported by knowledge sharing, capacity building, and skills development. A sincere appreciation to the Governments of India, Japan, and the State of Rajasthan, along with all participants, for their solution-focused contributions. UNESCAP's commitment to collaborating with the private sector and other stakeholders to drive forward the Jaipur Declaration and accelerate the circular economy agenda across the Asia-Pacific region was reaffirmed.

74. Mr. Yutaka Matsuzawa, Hon'ble Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, the Government of Japan, expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, (MoHUA), Government of India, the Government of Rajasthan, UN DESA/UNCRD, and UN ESCAP for successfully organizing the India 3R and Circular Economy Forum. The adoption of the Jaipur Declaration as a significant milestone, building on the Hanoi Declaration of 2013, and emphasized its role in guiding the transition to a circular economy (CE) over the next decade was highlighted. With over 1,000 delegates from 35 countries in attendance, the forum facilitated meaningful discussions on advancing circular economy and 3R principles. The fact that circular economy is crucial for addressing environmental challenges and achieving global commitments, including the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Montreal Framework was stressed. The Jaipur Declaration was recognized for its inclusivity, reflecting diverse national perspectives and reinforcing collective commitment to circular economy. Japan announced plans to establish an international circular economy network, positioning circular economy as a driver of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. Japan reaffirmed its dedication to solid waste management, circular economy principles, and knowledge-sharing, offering its expertise and technology to support this transition. Japan emphasized that the Forum will remain a key platform for regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, and advancing circular economy efforts in the region.

75. Honourable Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, the Government of India, highlighted India's commitment to advancing the circular economy, emphasizing resource efficiency, waste management, and sustainability. The minister reaffirmed India's leadership in the Jaipur Declaration (2025-2035), reinforcing regional cooperation and collective action. Global leaders, including representatives from Japan and the UN, underscored the importance of policy alignment, digital innovation, and cross-border collaboration. Discussions focused on key strategies such as waste-to-energy solutions, plastic recycling, and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as vital tools for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Country sessions delved into plastic waste management, circular business models, and financial challenges, stressing the need for private sector investment. Japan-led events showcased AI-driven waste monitoring systems and innovative recycling models, while technical site visits in Jaipur offered practical insights into urban sustainability efforts. Shri Sahu concluded by calling for continuous collaboration, strong

governance, and active industry participation to accelerate the transition to a circular economy.

76. Honorable Shri Manohar Lal, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) of the Government of India and the Chair of the Forum formally declared the adoption of the Chair Summary, as well as the adoption of the Jaipur Declaration, reinforcing commitments made during the forum. The chair expressed his gratitude towards the representatives of the Asia- Pacific region, state governments, team at MoHUA and Government of Japan for their contributions in making the forum successful. He extended a special thanks to UN DESA/UNCRD, and UN ESCAP for their valuable support in organizing this Forum. The chair declared that *"The Jaipur Declaration has been unanimously adopted by the Asia and Pacific countries. A guiding document has been prepared to suggest indicative strategies to countries as per national policies, circumstances and capabilities. A collaborative knowledge platform C-3 has also been agreed upon on this day - 5th March 2025".*