



**Centre for Responsible Business (CRB, [www.c4rb.org](http://www.c4rb.org))**

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## **1. Chapeau**

To advance inclusive and sustainable development, there is an urgent requirement for transformative breakthroughs.

Overhauling global value chains must assist developing nations equitably to innovate, build climate resilience and benefit from local value-addition. Collaboration is essential to lead firms' incentives to suppliers to catalyse high-value sustainability research, production and exports. Creating market-pull will motivate sustainable entrepreneurs to provide simple and reliable information to consumers, inclined towards pro-climate and sustainability products.

Governing emerging technologies like AI demands frameworks expanding affordable access to drive solutions, empowerment over inequality and boosting digital literacy to propagate an inclusive future.

Enacting youth-led innovation funds and leadership mechanisms is vital for steering sustainability transformations – bequeathing them a just planet where current and coming generations worldwide can secure shared prosperity with justice and climate safety. This decade, we must drive progress collectively across interconnected levers of change as envisioned in Our Common Agenda. Through such breakthrough transformation on critical fronts, we can transit to a sustainable future where all people across generations can thrive in dignity.

## **2. Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development**

### **2.1 Transforming Global Value Chains to foster inclusivity and equity**

Global Value Chains (GVCs) have emerged as a powerful means for advancing sustainable development – balancing the interest of both nature and of people. However, developing countries (that form the network of production/supply in GVCs) often face inequalities in capturing value, as the focus of international policy/legislation around GVC remain largely focused on risk-mitigation and much less on creating value. A number of OECD Member States have developed/are developing legislations that impact how they engage (through trade or commerce) with developing countries (suppliers) in GVCs.

High-income nations dominate R&D, design, and marketing while developing nations are limited to low-skill assembly work, production and commodity exports, causing unequal gains. A multi-pronged approach can address these asymmetries. Trade and investment agreements should encourage lead firms to assist developing country suppliers, upgrade their capabilities, and meet sustainability related requirements (including standards).

Many advanced members of the G20 (Australia, EU, Germany, UK, USA, etc.) have either developed or are in the process of developing stringent regulations on sustainable supply chains, which will make it imperative for exporting/supplying country enterprises to meet certain social, environmental and economic requirements set by the buyers/brands. A common set of (social, environmental and economic) parameters that are discussed and agreed among Members would help bring greater transparency and certainty in global value chains, and help integrate MSMEs into international trade and commerce, thereby creating jobs and supporting economic recovery where most needed. This is aligned with the G20 Delhi Leaders Declaration 2023.

It is proposed that G20 Government and Businesses should develop a Collaborative ‘G20 Initiative on Sustainable Global Value Chains’, for select sectors (and/or commodities) that have significant implications on climate, biodiversity, environment, smallholders, SMEs, women, migrant workers and youth. There is enough data globally to identify these sectors, and to initiate a work programme that would enable G20 members to work together for achieving specific social, environmental, economic objectives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Determined Contributions (NDCs). Some of the sectors/commodities that could be considered are: apparel and textiles; tea; coffee; palm oil; gems and jewellery; minerals (mica, nickel, copper, lithium, sandstone); etc.

## **2.2 Sustainable Design Thinking: Shaping a Collective Pact for a Thriving Future**

Design thinking is crucial for human-centric innovation, but narrow execution risks failing to address complex sustainability challenges. Ensuring equitable access and benefits to all constituencies, especially the vulnerable and marginalised, should be at the centre of all innovations. As the UN Summit 2024 shapes our collective pact for the future, the design methodology needs an urgent overhaul.

CRB proposes mainstreaming ‘Sustainable Design Thinking’ as a key principle of innovation. This involves integrating sustainability criteria assessment into the design process to respect resource limits and promote circular thinking and circular economy practices. To drive adoption, governments should champion sustainability in national innovation policies, and there should be accredited training and capacity building programs. Digital commons can enable collective learning, and trade incentives can encourage sustainability-focused redesigns. Imprinting environmental and equity audits in Human-Centred Design is imperative for innovative solutions aligned with needs and ecological sustainability. We urge ambitious UN leadership to rally global support for this transformation.

### **2.3 Drive Sustainable Consumption to encourage Sustainable Entrepreneurs**

An IBM Institute for Business Value report (2021) that analysed consumer perception across nine countries (Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Mexico, Spain, UK and USA) revealed that 84% of global respondents (over 14,000 adult consumers) considered sustainability an important criterion while choosing a product or a brand. Further, it revealed that millennials (66%) and people in rapidly growing economies, including India (78%) and China (70%), are most willing to change their purchasing behaviour to help reduce the negative impact on the environment (IBM Institute for Business Value 2021). Other studies (Deloitte 2023, McKinsey & Company 2023, Bain 2023) corroborate similar trends about 'inclined consumers'. As captured in a recent report of the UN Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNCTAD 2023), the market for sustainable products remains limited, despite the increase in consumer preference for sustainable products. Consumers' awareness of sustainability issues and their intentions to buy sustainable products has not significantly impacted sustainable purchasing.

Businesses and Governments need to invest in promoting consumer awareness about sustainable enterprise/products. Providing sustainability information about their enterprises and/or products could help businesses attract attention of 'inclined' consumers.

In certain markets, however, businesses have flouted boundaries to attract consumers by indulging in greenwashing (bogus or unverified claims about their sustainability performance). Given the implications of greenwashing on sustainable consumption in particular and sustainable business agenda in general, the international community needs to develop a set of 'Guidelines for Policy Framework and Regulatory Action against Greenwashing/False Sustainability Claims', to drive sustainable consumption in the marketplace.

### **3. Chapter II. International peace and security**

*(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 2)*

### **4. Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation**

#### **4.1 Driving local solutions for a global impact - fostering innovation for a sustainable future**

The CRB urges the UN to lead in pioneering new initiatives – 'Grassroots Innovation Incubators' across developing countries by 2025 that activate hyperlocal communities as change agents for sustainability. Governments must mandate municipalities to embed and adequately resource decentralised maker spaces steered by women, youth and indigenous representation. These incubators can crowdsource solutions leveraging local materials and traditional knowledge systems to extend affordable access to off-grid electricity, green entrepreneurs, sustainable mobility, and eco-housing - propagating frugal and inclusive innovations. Annual "Social Impact Innovation Challenges" can recognise replicable community-devised solutions while mobilising replication partnerships with urban centres. Such radical localisation of innovation ecosystems can foster agency and self-reliance.

## **4.2 Harnessing AI for Social Equity by 2025**

CRB urges the UN to convene a 'Global Alliance on AI for Social Equity' by 2025 encompassing governments, researchers and citizen groups to steer generative AI deployments towards empowering people in informal economies. Alliance working groups must formulate policy guardrails and portable social protection frameworks for gig workers at risk of displacement while using AI to augment their skills. Further, public-private partnerships must democratise access to AI for community services, cooperatives and micro-entrepreneurs to uplift marginalised groups. In addition to application, there should be equal attention towards design of AI products, such that they are sustainable and inclusive. Capacity-building programmes producing socially responsible AI talent from disadvantaged backgrounds are vital for equitable diffusion. Such purpose-driven global cooperation can ensure this transformative technology propagates prosperity, not poverty, in our societies.

## **4.3 Unlocking an Inclusive Digital Future**

CRB urges the UN to catalyse 'youth clubs' in every Global South secondary school by 2030 to secure an inclusive digital future. These peer-led clubs coached by female ICT mentors will propagate digital literacy - building skills to detect misinformation, protect rights online, and leverage tech for upgrading livelihoods. Linking these hyperlocal clubs through regional networks for experience sharing can amplify impact. Governments must integrate digital citizenship education within curriculums while ensuring internet connectivity and device access reaches marginalised communities. Such digitally enlightened and empowered generations in the Global South will drive an ethical digital transformation upholding rights and responsibilities - actualising the UN's Global Digital Compact.

## **4.4 Democratising Access to Green Solutions and Innovation**

The CRB recommends the UN to establish a facility to unlock broad access to protected sustainability innovations for developing countries through voluntary philanthropic licensing. Spearheaded by the UN Environment Programme, this pool of altruistically licensed patents will provide royalty-free technology usage rights to public institutions and informal eco-enterprises, allowing low-cost localised production. Governments must make sustainability-enhancing IP contributions mandatory for state-funded research to expand the commons. Connecting beneficiary entities to experts and ethical manufacturers can foster frugal innovation capabilities and self-reliance and democratise access to green solutions— supporting Global South climate resilience while rewarding inventors through reputational credits. A network of 'southern' Centre of Excellence on Circular Economy, Skilling and Entrepreneurship across Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean - should be established to train future entrepreneurs, leaders and managers on circular business models.

## 5. Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

### 5.1 Creating Sustainable Change: Harnessing the Power of Youth-led Enterprises

CRB urges the UN to institute the *'Planetary Stewardship Startup Initiative'* by 2025 to back a million Global South youth-led enterprises uplifting value chains. Government startup schemes must fund mentorships, incubators and no-collateral credit supporting student ventures, lifting marginalised artisan cooperatives, digitising informal workers, propagating agro-ecology and enabling last-mile clean energy access. Annual United Nations Green Enterprise Competitions will further finance expansions of winning sustainability startups while fostering cross-country inspiration and replication. With targeted capacity building, such coordinated mobilisation can nurture purpose-driven young change-makers into a movement propagating ethical value chains, decentralising opportunity and uplifting underserved communities.

### 5.2 Building Future-ready Youth Leadership for a Sustainable World

CRB proposes the UN spearhead a *'NextGen Multilateralism Initiation Program'* by 2025, nurturing youth capacities in policymaking and global governance and upholding sustainability. The initiative would comprise four interlinked platforms:

- **Global Youth Policy Labs**, with mentorships, co-designs legal frameworks on addressing climate change and public health risks, providing start-up grants to test instruments.
- **Youth Delegates Shadowing Leadership** wherein young elected representatives monitor and advise diplomatic processes at UN forums through a structured apprenticeship model focused on nature, human rights, and disarmament.
- **Pedagogy promoting facility** resourcing teaching capacity building, education infrastructure upgrades and contextualised curricula embedding climate action, environmental conservation and sustainability science.
- **Policy Labs** is led by indigenous elders, civil society, and youth, developing legal frameworks safeguarding future generations through an intergenerational knowledge exchange.

Smart partnerships with governments, academia, experts and Indigenous leadership leveraging these high-impact initiatives can develop future-ready youth leadership groomed to protect people and the planet. We urge the UN to rally multilateral support for this program.

## 6. Chapter V. Transforming global governance

*(Add your organization's concise, concrete, and action-oriented recommendations for Chapter 5)*