



## SDG Accountability

Roundtable conducted on Thursday, 28th<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 04:15 pm-06:15 pm IST

**Host:** WBA / IFC (World Bank) **Country:** Netherlands

**No of attendees:** 77

**No of Countries:** 15

### Moderator

1. Aparna Trichur representing the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)
2. Karon Shaiva - Chief Impact Officer & Managing Director of Idobro Impact Solutions and Managing Trustee of RISE Infinity Foundation.

### Experts:

1. Dr. Kumar Iyer- Advocate, The Quadruple Bottom Line, The Sustainability INDEX, Sustainable Strategy Mentor - Anyone who attended from Caux Roundtable Japan

### Summary:

The Roundtables at RISE World Summit are the core activity to encourage collaboration around the challenges the world faces. Subject matter experts enable breakthrough interactions to identify outcomes for post-event joint efforts and alliances, knowledge assets, and more for collective impact. More information on RISE Summit can be found at <https://risesummit.in/>. The private sector has a crucial role to play in advancing the SDGs, but to boost companies' motivation, there needs to be real change in the way that their impact is measured. Thresholds for Transformation and transformative benchmarks are the key to compare companies' performance on the SDGs.

Some of the key challenges and issues include effective collaboration across geographic divides, learning from best practices that draw in diverse perspectives, and under-represented and/or marginalized communities when talking about corporate action and accountability on the SDGs. How do we demand more transparency, leadership, and action on the SDGs from the SDG2000 companies? How can benchmarks be used to leverage this action? What are the thresholds that are required to accelerate progress on the SDGs and ultimately transform our world? These are some points of discussion at the table.

### Introduction:

The opening of the Session was done by **Karon Shaiva**. She welcomed **Aparna Trichur** representing the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) based out of Amsterdam, as co-host to start the session and set the context for the round table.

The discussion in the roundtable was divided into three parts- Challenges, Capabilities, Collaborations.

### Challenges:

**Karon Shaiva** then suggested that the discussion be started by identifying the challenges in the respective organizations to reach a point of collaboration or finding common goals.

**Aparna Trichur** introduced WBA, as a not-for-profit organization, a community of almost 200 global organizations that came together to generate a movement around increasing the private sector's contribution and impact towards SDGs and sustainable future for all and benefit from them as well. WBA has put in place benchmarks to measure the performance of companies on the global challenges and create an accountability mechanism and inspire corporate leadership. The benchmarks are set to empower all stakeholders from government civil society, consumers, and investors to employees and business leaders with key data and insight to encourage sustainable business. WBA hopes to motivate corporate leaders to do more and hold them to account.

**Deepali Jadia** talked about the challenge of awareness of the benchmarks that are associated with particular SDGs.

**Dr. Simi- Mishra** spoke of the challenge in India, where performance for the work done at state/ district/ regional is compared to the world standards and so it's largely government-based data. She shared her work of analyzing fragmented data, aligned indicators, and try to get a heat map for SDGs related to regional communities

**Karon Shaiva** underlined the huge challenge in collection, processing, and comparing data, addressing Aparna, who mentioned that WBA ensures neutrality of data for which it depends on their local and worldwide alliances in inclusive, representative multi-stakeholder wise setting.

**Punit-Pandey**, Advisor, IPE Global said that in the social sector, benchmarking gets more unclear, and that metrics & indicators need to be developed. He shared his experience of a problems in early childhood in, say Rochester and Rajasthan leads to multiple repercussions where it's difficult to find or use benchmarks to create an impact with multiple stakeholder's involvements through being target-driven funded project.

**Kumar Moorthy Iyer** - Pune, India emphasized the need for a minimum threshold for social indicators and a maximum threshold on economic and environmental (water, C-emission) indicators along with its allocations. There was a need to analyze why and then search for appropriate benchmarks and thresholds (security /income level) to apply.

### Capabilities & Solutions:

**Aparna** shared the importance of working with different opinionated people to reach a common goal.

**Kumar Moorthy Iyer** stated that corporates have worked towards SDGs through their in-house training of their employees and CSR programs.

To explain how to benchmark work **Aparna** said, for gender benchmark, they rely on their ally, Good Business Lab in India to get local inputs/data to feed in their benchmark. It was necessary to work with the principle of leaving no one behind.

**Mads Huuse** talked about projects proposing holistic environmental programs to compensate for the impact of other organizations in a timely fashion. A program where the net effect is better than bad even if any negative impact is not fully removed, should ideally be accountable.

**Karon** mentioned whether intended / unintended or good / bad, it is necessary and important to measure the impact.

**Deepali** spoke of benchmarks for plastic biodegradation measurement capability in India and the awareness needed to use them effectively.

**Jindra Cekan** from Prague said benchmarking is vital accountability and sectoral cross-industry collaboration would prove to be more successful in setting up thresholds. **Beroz Gazdar** shared that everything talked about should be shown as a business case with logic and reasoning to explain the measurement of work/ contribution in achieving SDGs. Also added that a positive, supportive tone at the top speeds up the process.

**Parth Bhatt** from United Nations Volunteers India works in international relations and diplomacy, expressing potential collaboration and more partnership among countries/ governments/ entrepreneurs and civil society workers.

**Prof. Vinod Menon** from Pune that impact investing, monitoring & evaluation, and tracking in various social areas (water scarcity, food, and power security) by way of qualitative measurement rather than quantitative, would enable reach to the unreachable and bring about vulnerability reduction. Establishing a business case of benchmarking this needs to be innovative, inclusive, and gender-sensitive.

**Mathew Mattam** from the Center for Youth Development Activities, presented a successful model of Trial village in Nandurbar where with a special focus on nutrition, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene, achieving women empowerment and inequality SDG goals became possible.

### Collaboration & Way Forward:

**Karon Shaiva** talked about Five ways to collaborate

1. Knowledge sharing- mentoring/consulting/ advisory relationship.
2. Replication of ideas
3. Joint production
4. Partner to expand
5. Joint funded/consortium projects

**Aparna** said that WBA hoped to build a community with allies that provide access to expertise and partnerships from local and international and gave out an open call to the audience to join them.

WBA strongly believes in partnerships and multi-stakeholder alliances, and has 194 global organizations today, including cross stakeholder groups like academic and research institutions, benchmark reporting platforms, business and industry platforms, financial institutions, government agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations, helping it to become truly effective. WBA allies ensure consultations and benchmarks are used by companies' investors, policymakers, and civil society to create impact enabling business behavioral change across the group. Aparna then approached Karon and participants at the round table to discuss and explore effective collaboration across geographical divides and best practice endured or experiences

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Prof. Vinod Menon - Founder member - NDMA -  
Govt of India  
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Aparna Trichur - World Benchmarking Alliance  
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**Shabnam Rangwala** briefed about her project with children with disabilities and how pandemic allowed collaborating with Community based organizations in rural areas in lower-middle-income countries and professionals in the cities who can share their knowledge with the use of technology.

**Jiju** Shared a small case study as a government office where she collaborated with the education department to collect statistics/ data on school-going girls and their issues, Infosys set up the kitchen and was able to receive funds from her owner organization catering to 20,000 then to about three lakhs children currently in that area.

**Vinod Menon** introduced 3 networks Climate Action Network, South Asia, with 300 members in eight South Asian countries, a South Asian network

of humanitarian assistance organizations, viral Commission recommissions with 50 countries to the audience.

**Beroz Gazdar** shared a collaboration example in the cement industry where the sustainable cement association was created to share best practices towards a greater goal of bringing C-footprint down while being competitors in the marketplace.

**Kumar Moorthy Iyer** emphasized that our conscience is the biggest benchmark and not to look beyond or to the government.

**Shalin Gor** from London spoke of work done by Good Business Lab (GBL), a Labor innovation lab focused on developing scalable solutions backed with rigorous academic research to design Work or well-being initiatives which also provide financial returns for firms through improved productivity retention and general well-being. She said partnerships and different perspectives from different geographical locations helped to understand the challenge holistically and solve SDGs. She shared information on an ongoing project, to survey and understand the Gender issues in the garment workers in the manufacturing industry of India, where GBL is part of the WBA alliance and other organizations across the world.

#### **Thank you and Closing note:**

Aparna gave a finishing note with four key takeaways; the importance of localized inputs, traditional as well as non-traditional partnerships to achieve SDGs, the need to bridge an awareness gap, and inclusive principle - multi-stakeholder groups. She concluded the session by thanking Karon and others and welcomed participants to ally and sharing best practices with communities

**Note:** For a more detailed understanding of the session outcomes, kindly access a complete recording at <https://youtube.com/channel/UC2UI5Nf1yN0E5hifaSVOpEw>

A LinkedIn group has been created by RISE World Summit Team to foster collaboration between participants. <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12494977>

More information on RISE Summit can be found at <https://risesummit.in>