

Press Release

CII Conference on "Water Stewardship in Food & Beverage Sector"

Wednesday, 29 May 2024 : New Delhi

Collaborative actions will go a long way in driving water stewardship in Food and Beverage sector

Industry needs to innovate to create products from treated wastewater. Focus on harvesting rainwater could help recharge our water bodies and make use of a resource that is otherwise wasted, said **Ms Inoshi Sharma**, Executive Director, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Government of India. She was speaking at the CII Conference on Water Stewardship in Food and Beverage Sector 2024 organised by CII's Centre of Excellence on Water - CII Water Institute and CII Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE).

Labelling is a critical aspect for packaged drinking water and its compliance continues to be challenge, observed Ms Sharma. She emphasised that adherence to labelling requirements and corrective measures to ensure compliance is of paramount importance.

Ms Sharma also mentioned that in alignment with the government's vision of 'One Nation, One Commodity, One Regulator,' FSSAI intends to simplify regulations and administrative processes for businesses operating in the food sector by merging BIS mark mandatory requirement for packaged drinking water within FSSAI regulations.

Mr Thakur Brahmanand Singh, Member Secretary, Central Ground Water Authority, Government of India, in the context of depleting ground water resources underscored the use of harvested rainwater and grey water as a gamechanger in addressing water crisis. On the increasing water demand from Industry, Mr Singh emphasized that industry should strive to improve its specific water consumption. Regular water audits are essential for determining water use efficiency, mentioned Mr Singh.

Ms Hina Nagarajan, Conference Chairperson and Managing Director & CEO, Diageo India mentioned that water stewardship is a shared commitment towards securing our future. The conference organised by CII Water Institute will go a long way in driving large scale collective action. The deliberations focussed on the need for integrating water risk considerations into the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies of F&B companies. The cross-learning emanating from the plenaries will prompt all stakeholders to evaluate the importance of transparent water management approaches with clear accountability and performance indicators. By integrating purpose with profitability, industry can demonstrate that business success and environmental sustainability can go hand in hand.

At Diageo India, preserving water for life is integral to our 10-year 'Society 2030: Spirit of Progress' ESG action plan that sits at the heart of our business strategy. From fostering collaborative initiatives to overachieving replenishment targets, we strive to set a holistic example of responsible water management, inspiring collective action.

Mr Ajay Popat, Chairman – Core group on New & Cutting-Edge technologies, CII National Committee on Water & President, Ion Exchange (India) Limited emphasised on strategies for Water Stewardship which include efficient water use through adoption of water audits, technology integration, wastewater management by focusing on treatment and reuse, supply chain management involving sustainable sourcing, collaborative initiatives and risk mitigation through water risk assessment. By

prioritizing water stewardship, organizations can contribute to a more sustainable future while reaping significant environmental, economic, social, and reputational benefits, concluded the speaker.

Dr Kapil Kumar Narula, CEO & Executive Director, CII Triveni Water Institute urged industry to be conscious of the watershed in which their plant is located. This will enable industry to undertake measures to ensure operational sustainability of their business operations, added Dr Narula. In this connection, he mentioned about the water neutrality guidelines prescribed by NITI Aayog which provide a systematic, scientific roadmap for addressing vulnerabilities and embarking on the journey of water neutrality.

The Conference deliberated on pertinent issues, challenges specific to water use efficiency and sustainability in Food & Beverage sector and showcased opportunities to improve productivity by leveraging cutting edge innovation & technology, adopting standards and collaborative actions for sustainable water management in the sector.

Other Speakers at the conference included, Dr Vishal Gandhi, Scientist E, Central Pollution Control Board; Dr Amit Sharma, Director (Science & Standards), FSSAI ; Ms Reeba Abraham, Deputy General Manager, APEDA; Mr Angelo George, CEO, Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd; Ms Shilpa Nischal, Principal Counsellor, CII-Triveni Water Institute; Mr Avinash Mishra, Former Adviser – Water & Land Resources, NITI Aayog, Government of India; Mr KVSN Raju, President, Elico Ltd; Mr Girish Girilal, Business Development - Food & Beverages Solutions and Water, Siemens ;Mr Ashwini Kumar Raina, Danfoss Industries Pvt. Ltd; Mr Kunal Soni, Deputy Group Field Officer- Environment, India and SAARC Nation, HORIBA India Private Limited; Mr Ramnath Vaidyanathan, AVP and Head of Environmental Sustainability– Good & Green, Godrej Industries Limited and Associate Companies ; Ms Shefali Sapra, Vice President, Corporate Communications, Mr Saiyed Imam, DSR Portfolio & Agronomy Lead – Asia, Bayer Crop Science Limited; Mr Ankit Gupta, General Manager-Sustainability, ITC Limited; Mr Prabhakant Jain, Lead CSR, DS Group

The Conference was attended by more than 150 delegates with representation from both Central & State Governments, Food processing, Beverage & Distillery companies, Technology & Solution Providers, Research and Academia, Consultants and Sector specific associations.

CII-Triveni Water Institute, (CII-TWI), is CII's Centre of Excellence on water. The Institute works closely with the government, industry and civil society on providing integrated solutions on various water related challenges. Key services rendered by the Institute include, comprehensive water audits, hydrological evaluations for watershed level planning using state-of-the-art tools and techniques, trainings, capacity building and outreach activities.

CII Food & Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE) strives to strengthen the agrifood systems transformation through robust partnerships, targeted multi stakeholder engagement and evidence building thereby aligning its approach with the national agenda of securing better lives and livelihoods for all. The CoE is committed towards catalysing innovation, building capacity, enhancing productivity and establishing supply chain linkages across the agriculture and food value chain.

29 May 2024

New Delhi