



DA at India's Exclusive Symposium on Mainstreaming Circular Economy

Development Alternatives (DA) participated in the 2nd Circular Economy Symposium (CES) 2018 hosted by FICCI from 14th – 15th May 2018 at the Federation House, New Delhi. This annual summit brings together circular economy crusaders from all over India to exchange their ideas, knowledge and action on circular economy. The second edition symposium focused on business strategies on circular economy, global and Indian best practices in key sectors such as agriculture & food processing, manufacturing, electronics, and metals & mining.

Zeenat Niazi (Vice President, DA) chaired the session on 'Opportunities and Challenges in the Circular Economy Ecosystem'. She put forward the policy perspective on the challenges associated with the adoption of circular economy, and highlighted challenges and opportunities for going forward. She emphasised the need for a systemic view that includes stakeholders from different disciplines, sectors and levels of engagement in order to design win-win strategies for all. She indicated a need to focus on four common objectives that would drive the economic-social and political system towards promoting circular approaches in economy. These reflect the needs of the stakeholders involved, and are: (1) Sustainability of business including resource risk, (2) New business opportunities that result in new and greener jobs, (3) Improvement in system health which returns the balance of the natural eco-system and creates genuine intra-actor relationships and (4) Equitable benefits to all that ensure access of ecosystem and economic services for all – "to more with less".

Zeenat highlighted that the policy, regulation, investment and behaviour shifts towards circular economy would result in new ways of design and manufacturing, new synergies within and across sectors, and radically different consumption behaviours. Key challenges and opportunities viewed as two sides of a coin include, among others, the informality of the Indian market, conflicts across policies, the tremendous potential of new technology coupled with gross inequities of access and distribution that foreclose opportunities of economic and ecological gains to the historically poor and vulnerable parts of society.

Through conversation with India's experts on circular economy, the summit helped develop a collective understanding of challenges for a full-fledged mobilisation towards Circular Economy, and the need for an action plan in the Indian context.