

## **“India's transition to circular economy requires collective action; R&D, industry collaboration important”: Amitabh Kant**

–India’s G20 Sherpa and experts from WRI India, RMI, CEEW convened for a discussion on circular economy solutions

– Multilateral collaborations along with infrastructure, innovation, & policy alignment can position India as a circular economy leader

**New Delhi, 16 December 2024:** “India’s transition to a circular economy is not the responsibility of any single stakeholder. It requires collective action, deliberate and coordinated effort across industries, and must be driven by R&D,” said Mr Amitabh Kant, G20 Sherpa for India, at the launch of a collaborative discussion paper, *Unlocking India's Circular Economy Potential: Insights Across Seven Key Sectors*, today in New Delhi. The paper was launched at a session hosted by the World Resources Institute (WRI) India, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), and the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). The paper provides actionable recommendations to advance circularity in sectors including solar, batteries, steel, construction, agriculture, wastewater, and municipal solid waste.

**In his keynote speech, Mr Kant emphasised,** “Circular economy offers a really compelling solution to the dilemma that India is facing of urbanisation and industrialisation. India’s vibrant startup ecosystem and digital advancements position us uniquely to revolutionise resource management and accelerate the transition to a circular economy. To achieve this, we must work collectively — government, industry, think tanks, and civil society — to build an ecosystem that embeds circularity at scale. If we can find a solution for India, we will deliver a model for the Global South and the world. The release of this paper is a critical step, but its success depends on relentless action to ensure these recommendations translate into policy, innovation, and real-world impact.”

Leading voices from the government, academia, and industry, such as Sree Kumar Kumaraswamy (Program Director – Clean Air Action, WRI India), Akshima Ghate (Managing Director, RMI), and Dr Arunabha Ghosh (CEO, CEEW) also came together for a panel discussion moderated by Jayashree Nandi (Assistant Editor, *The Hindustan Times*) at the session to deliberate on the practical steps needed to embed circularity into India’s economic fabric. Seema Paul, Program Director at the Sequoia Climate Foundation, provided a global perspective through a video address.

**Madhav Pai, CEO, WRI India, said,** “India's economic and climate actions will significantly shape its future. As we transition from a linear to a circular economy, the stakes couldn’t be higher: the opportunity to create millions of jobs and mitigate the environmental impacts of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. The discussion paper by WRI India, CEEW, and RMI explores the immense potential of circularity spans across sectors, from transforming agricultural waste into value-added products to optimising resource use in construction amidst accelerating urbanisation. This is not merely an environmental imperative but an economic opportunity to position India as a global leader in circular economic practices.”

**Ms Akshima Ghate, MD, RMI, said,** “India stands at the crossroads of innovation and sustainability, with circular economy practices offering a pathway to redefine how resources are managed and utilised in various sectors. This is not merely a call to recycle but a call to reimagine systems, foster resilience, and create new value across industries. RMI, along with CEEW and WRI India, through this discussion paper has made an attempt to highlight the power of collective action. From rethinking steel production to revolutionising battery ecosystems, unlocking circularity is not just a necessity — it is India’s opportunity to lead.”

**Dr Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW, said,** “India has immense potential — people, supply chains, markets — to find value in waste. How do we move from a zero-waste society to an infinite-wealth society? In circularity, we change the source from which we generate infinite wealth. The circular economy is not just about recycling; it’s about rethinking how we design, use, and repurpose resources. It’s crucial for our sustainable development, energy security, and climate action goals. By bringing together the diverse expertise of CEEW, RMI, and WRI India, this initiative showcases how collaboration is not optional but essential to addressing India’s unique challenges. As Indians, we know waste can be wealth. It’s time to unlock its business opportunity — from steel to silicon to sludge.”

The paper calls for investment in advanced recycling technologies to improve material recovery rates and reduce reliance on virgin resources. The development of cohesive policy and regulatory frameworks, such as Extended Producer Responsibility and Circular Product Design Standards, is also vital to incentivising waste reduction and reuse. Further, building robust infrastructure for waste collection and recycling, especially in underserved regions, will ensure that materials are efficiently recovered and reused. These measures, coupled with collaboration across government, industry, and civil society, could unlock significant economic value while mitigating environmental harm.

Read the full discussion paper *Unlocking India's Circular Economy Potential: Insights Across Seven Key Sectors* [here](#).

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#### About

#### WRI

#### India

WRI India, an independent charity legally registered as the India Resources Trust, provides objective information and practical proposals to foster environmentally sound and socially equitable development. Through research, analysis, and recommendations, WRI India puts ideas into action to build transformative solutions to protect the earth, promote livelihoods, and enhance human well-being.

Know more: <https://wri-india.org/>

#### About

#### RMI

RMI is an independent nonprofit, founded in 1982 as Rocky Mountain Institute, that transforms global energy systems through market-driven solutions to align with a 1.5°C future and secure a clean, prosperous, zero-carbon future for all. We work in the world’s most critical geographies and engage businesses, policymakers, communities, and NGOs to identify and scale energy system interventions that will cut climate pollution at least 50 percent by 2030.



RMI has offices in Basalt and Boulder, Colorado; New York City; Oakland, California; Washington, D.C.; Abuja, Nigeria; and Beijing. RMI has been supporting India's mobility and energy transition since 2016.

### **About CEEW**

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) — a homegrown institution with headquarters in New Delhi — is among the **world's leading climate think tanks**. The Council is also often ranked among the **world's best-managed and independent think tanks**. It uses data, integrated analysis, and strategic outreach to explain — and change — the use, reuse, and misuse of resources. It prides itself on the independence of its high-quality research and strives to **impact sustainable development at scale** in India and the Global South. In over fourteen years of operation, CEEW has impacted over 400 million lives and engaged with over 20 state governments. Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) [@CEEWIndia](https://twitter.com/CEEWIndia) for the latest updates.