



THE ENERGY AND
RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Creating Innovative Solutions for a Sustainable Future

WSDS-ACT4EARTH VIRTUAL DIALOGUE

Strengthening Multilateralism on the Road to COP30 and Beyond

Date: 17 October 2025 (Friday)

Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm (IST)

[Please join 5 minutes before start of event]

Virtual Platform: WebEx

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

About World Sustainable Development Summit

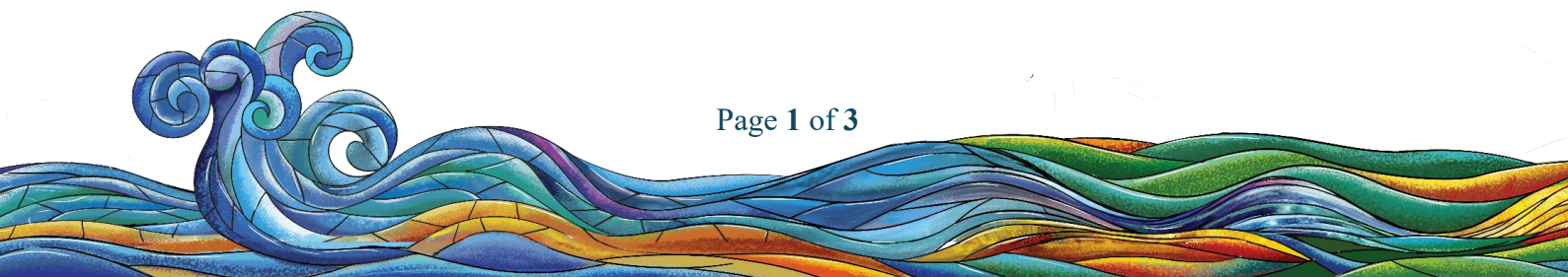
The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship multistakeholder convening organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades in making ‘sustainable development’ a globally shared goal. As the only independently convened international summit on sustainable development and the environment based in the Global South, WSDS strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of global communities by assembling the world’s most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform. Since its inception, WSDS has convened 59 Heads of State and Government, 149 Ministers, 13 Nobel Laureates, 2,158 Business Leaders, 3,730 Speakers, and more than 41,000 Delegates representing a diverse base of ecosystem actors from around the globe.

About Act4Earth

The Act4Earth initiative, launched at the valedictory session of the 21st World Sustainable Development Summit, builds on WSDS discussions to sustain engagement through research and dialogue. Its core objectives are to amplify Global South perspectives for equitable global governance, and to accelerate progress towards climate and sustainable development goals through knowledge-based dialogue. Act4Earth comprises two interlinked components. The COP Compass seeks to promote equitable multilateral mechanisms capable of driving paradigm shifts in climate action. The SDG Charter focuses on identifying policy gaps and recommending measures to embed sustainability within governance frameworks, thereby advancing environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

Background

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) serves as the apex multilateral institution for global climate governance. Its annual Conference of the Parties (COP) is the key decision-making forum that brings together member states and other stakeholders to negotiate and advance collective climate action.



In 2024, the world experienced its first year above 1.5 °C, a stark reminder that the Paris Agreement’s promise remains unfulfilled. The tenth anniversary in 2025 arrives as extreme floods, droughts, cyclones, and wildfires highlight the urgent need for adaptation, according to the World Meteorological Organization’s 2025 report. The United Nations Environment Programme’s 2024 assessment shows that national commitments for 2030 remain insufficient, and even if fully implemented, would still result in 2.6–2.8 °C warming by 2100. Although this is lower than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2014 baseline projection of 3.7–4.8 °C without further mitigation, it is still inadequate to secure the Paris temperature goals. The Agreement has bent the emissions curve downward relative to business as usual, but not enough to realise its vision.

This moment of planetary urgency also calls for renewed attention to the rules and institutions that govern global cooperation. Strengthening multilateral frameworks is indispensable for delivering climate ambition and justice.

With the above background, TERI is organising an Act4Earth Dialogue centred around the following framework. Drawing on institutionalist theories, the framework identifies five variables that are both analytically significant for assessing international organisations and measurable across time and cases. Table below explains each variable along with for multilateral reforms.

Framework and Questions for Multilateral Reforms

VARIABLE	DESCRIPTION	QUESTIONS
Scope	Breadth of mandate and use of issue linkage to foster cooperation.	Does the scope allow for the integration of emerging scientific evidence and evolving climate priorities that demand multi-scalar responses over time?
Membership	Inclusivity, global or regional reach, participation of non-state actors, and exit provisions.	How effectively does the membership structure ensure representation of diverse groups affected by climate change?
Decision Making	Agenda-setting, decision rules (consensus, majority, veto), and process.	Do decision-making processes deliver outcomes that enable action with the urgency, speed, and scale needed to address climate change?
Functions	Set norms, mobilize members, socialization, and create, apply, & adjudicate rules.	Do the functions of multilateral processes provide effective mechanisms for monitoring, compliance, and enforcement?
Form	Institutional design including bureaucracy, committees, and subsidiary bodies.	How adaptable is the institutional form in responding to planetary crises, political shifts, and evolving stakeholder demands?

The expected outcomes of the dialogue will include actionable insights on operationalizing equity in climate governance and concrete reform proposals to strengthen multilateral mechanisms.

Format

The dialogue will start with a Welcome Address. TERI will then make a framing presentation followed by panel discussions and interactions with the participants. The event will end with a vote of thanks.

Draft Structure and Flow

<i>Speakers are requested to join 15 minutes before the start of the virtual dialogue for audio-visual check</i>	
~5 Minutes	Welcome Address
~10 Minutes	Framing Presentation by TERI
~90 Minutes	Roundtable Discussion (Each speaker gets an intervention of 7-8 minutes)
~10 Minutes	Q & A
~5 Minutes	Summary and Vote of Thanks

