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CONCLAVE

SUSTAINABILITY CONCLAVE

TOWARDS LIFE@100



The Sustainability Conclave: Towards LIFE @100, hosted by the Hotel Association of India (HAI) in partnership with Jaquar, brought together key industry leaders, government officials, and sustainability experts to drive conversations on aligning the hospitality industry with sustainable practices. With a focus on India's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainable tourism, the Conclave aimed to chart a path for the industry to achieve net-zero targets and embrace sustainability at its core.

In his welcome address, M.P. Bezbaruah, HAI Secretary General, set the stage, followed by HAI President and Chairman of Radisson Hotel Group, K.B. Kachru, who highlighted the association's dedication to aligning business goals with sustainability. Kachru pointed out the impressive sustainability track record of Indian hotels, with 99.5% implementing energy efficiency initiatives and 87% working to reduce water use. However, he stressed that participation alone is not enough, saying, "We need clear targets and tangible outcomes; this is the need of the hour."

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Sustainability as the Future of Indian Hospitality

In his keynote address, SUMAN BILLA, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, underscored the need for Indian hotels to set clear sustainability goals, drawing inspiration from Kerala's Responsible Tourism initiative. He called for the adoption of prescriptive sustainability standards and urged the government to provide tax incentives to encourage hotels to meet these targets. Billa emphasised the global trend towards eco-conscious tourism, highlighting Scandinavian countries' carbon-neutral goals and citing examples like Singapore's Resource Efficiency Grant and Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism.

MUGDHA SINHA
Director General, Ministry of Tourism,



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further reinforced the importance of LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment), introduced by Prime Minister Modi at COP26. She highlighted how this mission aims to reduce the carbon footprint of the tourism sector and emphasised the role of responsible travel practices in ensuring the longevity of the planet. "Sustainable tourism is not just about business; it's about ensuring we leave behind a planet for future generations to explore and enjoy."

AMANDEEP GARG
Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, spoke about the global appreciation of Mission LIFE, citing participation from millions of individuals in various environmentally-conscious events. He

called for greater collaboration between the government, industry, and local communities to make LIFE a mainstream practice in Indian tourism. "We must take this forward as a mass movement towards an environmentally conscious lifestyle," Garg said.

HAI's Commitment and Best Practices in Sustainability

HAI took a significant step by pledging to sustain efforts in preserving the environment for future generations. Key leaders, including K.B. Kachru, (HAI President and Chairman of Radisson Hotel Group), Rohit Khosla (Vice President HAI & Executive VP of Operations, IHCL),

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Ajay K. Bakaya (Managing Director, Savarar Hotels Pvt. Ltd.), Sonali Chauhan (Member HAI and General Manager, IHCL), M.P. Bezbaruah, Secretary General HAI and Charulata Sukhija, Deputy Secretary General HAI, and all HAI Members at the Conclave participated in the HAI Pledge Taking, affirming their commitment to fostering sustainability within the hospitality industry.

Panel discussions focused on energy efficiency, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, and renewable energy showcased how the hospitality industry can play a pivotal role in driving sustainability. Speakers from ITC Hotels, Oberoi Group, Chalet Hotels, shared insights on best practices, ranging from smart sustainable hotel designs.

RAVI SINGH
Secretary General and CEO of World Wide Fund for Nature - India, emphasised the importance of long-term environmental protection and sustainable development.

H.C. VINAYAKA
Vice President - Technical, EHS & Sustainability, ITC Ltd - Hotels Division highlighted the concept of "responsible luxury," demonstrating how luxury and sustainability can coexist.

SUMIT RAWAT
Vice President Engineering, The Oberoi Group, deliberated on creating smart sustainable hotels using principles of engineering & sustainability.

JANHAVI PARAB
Deputy General Manager - ESG & Sustainability, Chalet Hotels Limited, highlighted energy-efficient operations, and responsible resource management.

RAJESH MEHRA
Promoter and Director Jaquar group presented a very insightful presentation by highlighted the importance of 100% sustainable sanitary ware production and waste management. He stated that as a brand deeply invested in sustainability, Jaquar continuously works to reduce environmental impact and conserve resources.

CB RAMKUMAR
Vice Chair, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), in his remarks emphasised on the resource efficiency, circular economy and minimising water consumption. Speakers from IHCL, Lemon Tree, Marriott International and The Park Hotels shared their insights.

GAURAV POKHARIYAL
Executive Vice President - Human Resources, IHCL mentioned on attaining its goal to train 1,00,000 youth by 2030 in the hospitality industry.

ARADHANA LAL
Senior Vice President - Sustainability & ESG, Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd. focussed on providing employment to specially abled in the sector.

DEEPAI BHATIA
Area Director of Sales, Marriott International, spoke about the importance of customer relationship and how one should engage with its customers.



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RAJESH RADHAKRISHNAN
Area General Manager of The Park Chennai, emphasised the importance of addressing over-tourism by developing new destinations to enhance the tourism and hospitality sector.

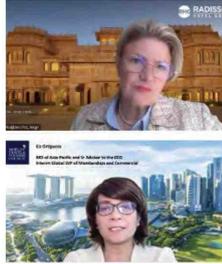
Sustainability Trends and Global Insights

The Conclave also explored global sustainability trends, with experts noting the need for the Indian hospitality sector to catch up with international standards. Inge Huijbrechts, Chief Sustainability & Security Officer at Radisson Hotel Group, spoke on the importance of setting clear

net-zero goals, while Liz Origuera from the World Travel & Tourism Council pointed out that climate change is a pressing concern in Asia, urging the Indian government and industry leaders to act swiftly. "It's no longer about 'why' we need sustainability; it's about 'how' we implement it," she stressed.

Global best practices such as Singapore's Resource Efficiency Grant and Costa Rica's sustainable tourism certification were presented as models for India to follow. The discussions also highlighted how Europe enforces sustainability with punitive measures, something India should consider to accelerate its progress.

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Special LIFE Actions and the Role of Tourists and Businesses

One of the key outcomes of the Conclave was the focus on LIFE actions for both tourists and tourism businesses. Special actions for tourists included:

- Saving energy and water
- Saying no to single-use plastics
- Reducing waste
- Empowering local businesses and communities
- Respecting local culture and heritage
- Consuming local foods
- Conserving natural heritage

For tourism businesses, actions included signing up for the Tourism for LIFE



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(TFL) certification, with Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels, aimed at encouraging hotels and destinations to adopt and promote sustainable practices.

The Way Forward: A Greener Future for Hospitality

The Conclave ended on a high note with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HAI and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). This partnership will help Indian hotels adopt global standards in sustainable travel and tourism, positioning them to meet the growing demands for eco-conscious travel.

As Rohit Khosla concluded the Conclave, he reiterated the importance of collaboration and urgency in achieving sustainability targets: "The hospitality industry must act now to balance growth with sustainability. Our actions today will shape the future of tourism in India and the world."

The HAI Sustainability Conclave not only reinforced the industry's commitment to sustainable practices, but also served as a call to action for all stakeholders to work together towards a future where tourism, environmental conservation, and economic growth coexist in harmony.

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