

PRESS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

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CAG SEMINAR ON BLUE ECONOMY

The Comptroller & Auditor General of India hosted a seminar on the challenges and opportunities in the Blue Economy on 27th February 2023 at the CAG Office in New Delhi. The seminar was held in the runup to the Engagement Group Meet of SAI 20 Nations next month, being organised as part of the G20 presidency of India.

With India assuming Presidency of the G20 in 2022-2023, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) holds the chair for SAI20. In line with the Indian theme of the G20 Presidency- "**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**" or "**One Earth. One Family. One Future**", the CAG has selected two priority areas viz. 'Blue Economy' and 'Responsible AI' for deliberations.

Highlighting the importance of blue economy, Mr Girish Chandra Murmu, CAG of India, said that the blue economy economic system promotes the sustainable use of marine and freshwater resources while conserving their environments. It encompasses policies and operational dimensions aimed at producing food and energy, supporting livelihoods, and driving economic advancement and welfare.

Mr Murmu emphasized that the Blue Economy while being intrinsically linked to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 - which focuses on

conserving and using oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development -- shall also be viewed from a holistic perspective of SDG 13 - Climate Action; SDG 6 - Clean Water; SDG 7- Clean and Renewable Energy.

“The blue economy occupies a vital position in India’s economic growth. It could well be the next multiplier of GDP and well-being, provided sustainability and socio-economic welfare are kept at the centre-stage,” said Mr Murmu.

Mr Murmu highlighted that while there were audit criteria and framework for auditing sub-sectors, such as, marine fisheries, coastal eco-system, aquaculture, coastal and marine tourism, bio-technology from marine resources and extraction of sea-bed mineral resources, integrating them into a single auditing framework would be key to all Supreme Audit Institutions, including the SAI20 Engagement group.

Mr Murmu emphasized that SAIs could strive to scale up their efforts, develop study papers on the condition of the Blue Economy and make recommendations on how the governments could direct their efforts and policies for sustainable development of the Blue Economy of their nations.

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, Chair of FICCI’s Task Force on Blue Economy, Mr. Tapas Paul, Lead Environmental Specialist at World Bank, Dr. Purvaja Ramachandran, Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Dr. P Krishnan, Director, Bay of Bengal Project, Prof. S.K Mohanty, Research and Information System for Developing countries and Mr. Avinash Mishra, Advisor, NITI Aayog were the speakers for the event. The G20 Secretariat and other G20 working/engagement groups also attended that seminar.

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia said: “The subject of Blue Economy has a place for all of us – scientists, technologists, diplomats, business and policy-makers and the thinktank community. By nature, it is a mutli-dimensional, multidisciplinary

subject.” He stressed on the importance of maritime and naval security, saying “without it, we cannot think of stabler development.”

Mr Tapas Paul said that three areas – technology, programme and policies –will determine whether Blue economy is sustainable. He also highlighted the importance of gender equity in India’s emerging Blue economy planning.

Dr Purvaja Ramachandran, Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management said that seven priority areas were identified in India’s draft for the Blue economy. She was optimistic that India would adapt and adopt the UNESCO-IOC guidelines and the national coastal mission will be integrated with the blue economic activities shortly.

Dr P Krishnan, Director, Bay of Bengal Project, spoke about harnessing of biotic Resources. He stressed that the fisheries sector is a highly connected sector and is the central theme of the Blue Economy.

Prof S.K Mohanty, Research and Information System for Developing countries, stated that “Blue Economy is the fastest growing economy than other sectors and stressed the need for publishing reports on Blue Economy, organizing discussion to create awareness about the sector.

Mr. Avinash Mishra, Advisor, NITI Aayog, stated that the “Blue Economy plays a vital role in the Indian economic system. It has a great potential and we need to pay greater attention to it.”