

Editorial

Corporate–NGO Collaboration for Course Correction on Climate

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ABSTRACT

Urgency regarding immediate concerted efforts to checkmate the looming climate crisis has been widely acknowledged by leaders of all hues across the world. Already, the governments of the world are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, attaining the SDGs by 2030 may not be possible without a strong collaboration between the corporate and the NGOs. This article tries to examine the imperatives for Corporate—NGOs collaborations and how they can effectively contribute towards climate action to protect the earth from vagaries of nature caused by phenomenal industrialization, urbanization, and consumerism. It makes sense that the corporations join hands with the NGOs when both are pursuing the same SDGs in the best interest of humanity.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Action, Corporations, NGOs

“Climate change is real. It is happening right now; it is the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating.”

–Leonardo Di Caprio, Actor & Environmentalist

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The emerging scenario vis-à-vis global warming and climate change is quite dreadful. The earth's greenhouse gas concentration has already reached an all-time high i.e., more than 50% higher than the pre-industrial era a couple of years back (Toffel, 2023). Hence, the mandate is clear –all the stakeholders need to combine before it is too late for us to save the earth. Moreover, the corporations and NGOs need to work in tandem for greater good. The combined strength of corporations and NGOs can support the efforts of the governments and communities in mitigating climate change and global warming. It is a matter of great relief that firms are progressively acknowledging their own need to get involved in the struggle against climate change — and quite often, strategic partnerships are proving key to making these goals become an attainable reality (Vitasek, 2023).

True, climate action by corporations is no longer limited to compliances and public relations. Corporations are now keen to contribute significantly towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the other hand, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been involved in promoting SDGs at several levels. Hence, if the corporations join hands with the NGOs, the results on their climate action endeavors are likely to be phenomenal. They can work together to change the traditional paradigm of production and consumption of power by developing a more sustainable ecosystem for clean energy, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. At the same time, the corporations can help the NGOs in ushering technological transformation in the farm sector to minimize wastages of all sorts and augmenting yield productivity. In fact, corporations and NGOs can collaborate to foster a sustainable supply-chain ecosystem to improve the carbon footprints of all the stakeholders.

Involvement of NGOs alongside the corporations in climate action can result in intervention strategies in sync with the needs of the local communities as also the constraints faced by various stakeholders. Collaboration between the corporations and the NGOs is also bound to promote a long-term perspective on climate action. It is possible that the corporations miss out on the bigger picture due to their inherent profit orientation and year-on-year focus on financial parameters. On the other hand, NGOs generally suffer from lack of technological competencies, financial resources, and professionalism. However, their combination can deliver on the promise of climate action in the long run. Public–Private Partnerships have

already demonstrated results in the infrastructure sector. New alignment between the corporations and the NGOs can attain similar distinctions.

There are several success stories to prove the point. For example, Essent, a Netherlands-based energy company joined hands with Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) as early as 1995 (Brouwer, 2013). Zomalabs, a venture capital firm has collaborated with The Nature Conservancy, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and WWF to create 'Enduring Earth' which runs Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiatives with a challenging goal to protect 600 million hectares by 2030. So far, they have been able to cover 120 million hectares across six countries. American Airlines, ArcelorMittal, Bank of America, BMO Financial Group, Boston Consulting Group, Builders Vision, Citi, General Motors, HSBC, Microsoft, Mitsubishi Corporation, The BlackRock Foundation, and IKEA Foundation have come together to promote funding for sustainable technologies via Breakthrough Energy Catalysts. Likewise, Tropical Forest Alliance is supported by various corporations with a noble purpose of fostering deforestation-free supply-chain ecosystems. Climate Finance Partnership, supported by a few corporations, provides funding for climate change mitigation, especially in the emerging markets. Charitable organizations linked to various corporations like Barr Foundation, Ikea Foundation, Gates Ventures, Heising-Simons Foundation, and Davide Lucile and Packard Foundation among others have come together to promote Clean Cooling Collaborative which works towards ensuring sustainable cooling for all. Furthermore, food major Danone has collaborated with Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to promote less carbon-intensive farming methods (Toffel, 2023).

It goes without saying that corporations and NGOs have a shared interest in the preservation of nature (Brouwer, 2013). NGOs and nonprofits can serve as valuable partners by helping to identify the most urgent environmental issues, whether at a regional or global scale (Vitasek, 2023). Further, responsible use of natural resources by corporations ensures a regular supply of important materials in the supply-chain ecosystems which makes it even more critical for the corporations to contribute towards maintaining a reasonable level of biodiversity in the regions where they operate. As such, the corporations need to be more responsive towards primary stakeholders in terms of better environmental performance

because of their direct financial relationship with them (Mitchell et al., 1997). Hence, both corporations and NGOs have vested interest in collaborative climate action (Pulver, 2018).

Success of green alliances between the corporations and NGOs would depend on well-thought-out strategic frameworks that can foster long-term collaborations with time-bound deliverables and commitments (Stafford et al., 2020). Hence, it is imperative that strategic green alliances are forged between corporations and NGOs, especially those working on environmental issues for mitigating climate change and global warming before the ultimate redemption lapses. The earth may collapse without any further warning and people may not have time to lament unless we listen to the wake-up call and initiate immediate course correction for climate mitigation through co-existential collaboration.

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