

## Connecting Nature and Climate: Dialogue on CBD COP17 and UNFCCC COP31

### *A UNEP-RIS Dialogue*

|                                                |                                                                 |                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DATE</b><br>Wednesday,<br>30 September 2026 | <b>TIME</b><br>2:30 PM - 5:00 PM<br>(Registration from 2:00 PM) | <b>VENUE</b><br>Juniper Hall,<br>India Habitat Centre |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|

### TENTATIVE AGENDA

| TIME                               | AGENDA ITEM                                                                            | DETAILS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM                  | Registration                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Session 1: Inagural</b>         |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2:30 PM - 2:40 PM                  | Welcome Remarks and<br>RIS Video                                                       | Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma, Director General, RIS.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 2:40 PM - 2:50 PM                  | Connecting the COPs:<br>Purpose of the Convening                                       | Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati, Head, UNEP India.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2:50 PM - 3:20 PM                  | Special Remarks                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H.E. Vahagn Afyan, Ambassador, <i>Embassy of Armenia to India</i>.</li> <li>H.E Philip Green, High Commissioner, <i>High Commission of Australia to India</i>. *</li> <li>Representative from <i>Embassy of Republic of Türkiye to India</i>. *</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 3:20 PM - 3:30 PM                  | Thematic Remarks                                                                       | Ms. Chandni Raina, Economic Adviser, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 3:30 PM - 3:40 PM                  | Group Photograph                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Session 2: Panel Discussion</b> |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3:40 PM - 4:20 PM                  | Panel Discussion on<br>Understanding the<br>UNCBD COP17 and<br>UNFCCC COP31<br>Agendas | <p><b>Moderator</b><br/>Dr. Divya Datt, Deputy Head, UNEP India.</p> <p><b>Panellists</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr. Tarun Kumar Kathula, Scientist, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.</li> <li>Mr. R.R. Rashmi, Distinguished Fellow, TERI.</li> <li>Mr. Aashish Chandorkar, Former Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to WTO, Geneva.</li> <li>Ms. Sehr Raheja , Deputy Programme Manager, Climate Change and Green Economy, Centre for Science and Environment.</li> <li>Dr. Ipsita Kumar, Consultant, RIS.</li> </ol> |
| 4:20 PM - 4:55 PM                  | Facilitated Discussion                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4:55 PM                            | Vote of thanks & Group<br>Photograph                                                   | Ms. Lakshmi Swathi, Consultant, RIS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5:00 PM onwards                    | High Tea                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

*\*To be confirmed*

**MC: Lakshmi swathi, Consultant, RIS**

**Rapporteurs: Ms. Paavni Mathur, Ms. Om Stutee, Ms. Krithika Manoj, Ms. Krishna Bhattacharya, Mr. Vimalendu Chauhan (RIS Team)**

**RIS**

Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries  
विकासशील देशों की अनुसन्धान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



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### Speaker Profiles



H.E. Vahagn Afyan,  
Ambassador, *Embassy of Armenia to  
India*

**H.E. Mr. Vahagn Afyan** has served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to India since September 2023. Prior to his current assignment, he served as Head of the Bordering Countries Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia from 2021 to 2023. His diplomatic career has included assignments in Poland, Georgia and Iran, as well as service in the Office of the President of Armenia and various departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma  
Director General, RIS

**Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma** is a distinguished economist and trade policy expert with over two decades of experience in international trade, including multilateral and regional negotiations. He has played an important role in advancing discussions on food security, agriculture, sustainability, and equitable trade outcomes for developing countries. He has provided evidence-based policy inputs to the Government of India as a trade negotiator. He has authored six books, along with numerous journal articles, working papers and book chapters, and regularly contributes to policy debates through articles and participation in national and international forums.



Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati  
Head, UNEP India

**Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati** is an internationally recognised conservation and development specialist with extensive experience at national, regional and international levels. He has held senior positions with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University, IUCN and the National Biodiversity Authority of India. His work spans biodiversity conservation, science-policy interfaces, environmental governance, law and sustainable development. He has advised more than 50 countries on conservation and development policy and has authored around 300 publications on biodiversity, development, biotechnology, law and governance.

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Ms. Chandni Raina  
Economic Adviser, Department of Economic  
Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of  
India

*Ms. Chandni Raina* is Adviser in the Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, where she works with the Climate Change and Finance Unit. A member of the Indian Economic Service, she has nearly three decades of experience across different ministries of the Government of India, including the Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Industry, and Labour and Employment. Her work has included economic policy, industry and trade-related issues, and more recently climate change and climate finance.



Mr. Tarun Kumar Kathula  
Scientist, Ministry of Environment, Forest  
and Climate Change, Government of India

*Mr. Tarun Kumar Kathula* Mr. Tarun Kathula is an Advisor/Scientist 'G' at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). He previously served as Director of Biodiversity and Biosafety at MoEFCC. With over 24 years of experience, he has implemented major Multilateral Environment Agreements including CBD, CITES, and CMS, represented India at international UN conferences, and served as the National Focal Point for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and Member Secretary of the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee.



Dr. Divya Datt  
Deputy Head, UNEP India

*Dr. Divya Datt* is an economist with over 20 years of professional experience in environmental policy research and advocacy. At UNEP, she manages the India programme, overseeing a wide-ranging agenda covering climate change, pollution, resource efficiency, ecosystems, and biodiversity. She has published articles and co-edited books on issues related to energy, environment, and resource federalism.



Mr. Aashish Chandorkar  
Former Counsellor, *Permanent Mission of  
India to WTO*

**Mr. Aashish Chandorkar** is a former Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of India to the WTO in Geneva, with extensive experience in international trade policy and multilateral negotiations. His work has covered a range of WTO issues, with particular engagement on the evolving interface between trade and environment, sustainability-related trade measures, market access, and broader trade and development concerns.



Mr R R Rashmi  
Distinguished Fellow, TERI

**Mr. R.R. Rashmi** is Distinguished Fellow and Programme Director with TERI's Green Shipping Programme, where he works on climate policy, strategy, carbon markets and environmental sustainability. A former Indian Administrative Service officer, he has served as Chief Secretary of Manipur, Special Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, and Adviser in India's Mission to the European Union in Brussels. He was India's principal negotiator under the UNFCCC for several years and contributed to national climate policy and international negotiations in the run-up to and after the Paris Agreement.



Ms. Sehr Raheja  
Deputy Programme Manager, Climate  
Change and Green Economy, Centre for  
Science and Environment

**Ms. Sehr Raheja** is a Deputy Programme Manager with the Climate Change and Green Economy Programme at the Centre for Science and Environment where she works on climate finance, energy transition, and international climate policy. Her research examines climate finance and development in the Global South, with a focus on the New Collective Quantified Goal, debt and climate vulnerability, Paris alignment of finance flows, international financial architecture reform, as well as critical minerals. She has authored reports, position papers, factsheets and articles; organised workshops and consultations with negotiators, experts and civil society organisations; and engaged with international policy processes through research, advocacy and reporting, including at UNFCCC's SB60, COP29, and UN DESA's FfD4.



Dr. Ipsita Kumar  
Consultant, RIS

Ipsita Kumar is an interdisciplinary quantitative researcher specializing in the food-energy-water-land nexus. Using advanced models and economic analysis, she evaluates how local and global decisions impact sustainable development, resource security, and socioeconomic outcomes. Her research spans Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States.

### Organising Team

*Ms. Flavia Lopes, Programme Support Officer,  
UNEP, India*

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**For more information, visit:**

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