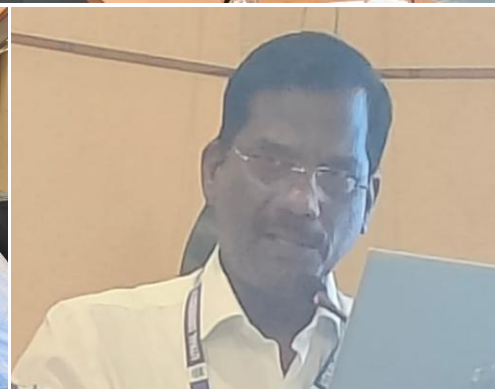


A Report
Stakeholders Consultation on Just Transition in Odisha
4th August 2025
Syndicate Hall, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar



Stakeholders Consultation on Just Transition in Odisha

Inaugural Session

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by **Prof. Dr. Kabir Mohan Sethy**, who greeted Prof. Jagneshwar Dandapat, Vice Chancellor, Utkal University, as the Chief Guest for the occasion, along with distinguished experts, policymakers, academics, journalists, development practitioners, and representatives from civil society and government institutions.

Prof. Sethy underscored that this consultation was taking place at a critical juncture, as the country advances towards its target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070. He emphasized that the transition to a low-carbon economy should be both environmentally sustainable and socially equitable, ensuring that no community, worker, or region is disadvantaged. Odisha, with its unique economic profile and vulnerable coastal population, has a strategic role to play in demonstrating resilience and foresight in this transition. The insights generated during the consultation are expected to inform state-level strategies and contribute meaningfully to national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement's forthcoming NDC 3.0.

Prof. Jagneshwar Dandapat delivered the inaugural address, highlighting the transformational nature of the ongoing energy transition—from conventional fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives such as biofuels and renewable energy. He emphasized that this transition must be inclusive, equitable, and just. Climate change is



already impacting diverse aspects of life, including weather patterns, agriculture, food security, and public health, making climate action a socio-economic imperative alongside environmental necessity. He expressed confidence that the consultation's technical sessions would facilitate cross-disciplinary knowledge sharing and generate robust recommendations to support Odisha's and the nation's climate goals.



Dr. Sanjay Vashist, Director, Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA), provided a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting and expectations from the consultations. He highlighted:

- Just Transition as an Ongoing Process: Transition is not a future event alone but an evolving process responding to the immediate impacts of climate change, such as floods and heatwaves.
- Integrated Challenges and Solutions: Both climate impacts and mitigation solutions require systemic changes in lifestyles and economic models.
- Scope Beyond Energy: Just Transition encompasses transformational adaptation, addressing loss and damage, socio-economic inclusivity, with justice at its core.
- Localised Understanding: Odisha offers a unique opportunity to define justice in transition tailored to state-level realities. Stakeholder participation across sectors—from miners to farmers to urban populations—is essential.
- State-Level Voices for National and Global Agendas: Experiences from Odisha should inform national strategies and global negotiations, fostering a strong connection between local realities and global frameworks.

In closing, Dr. Vashist urged participants to advance the dialogue into policy, research, and community platforms for broader acceptance and implementation.

Prof. Arun Shivshankar Mahanti from Utkal University delivered the keynote address, focusing on the contradictions between prevailing development models, resource extraction, and global sustainability goals. He proposed five foundational principles for a just transition:

- Historical Accountability: Acknowledging responsibilities of current actors for past and ongoing environmental impacts.
- People-Centered Approach: Ensuring communities are central to decision-making processes.
- Democratisation of Climate Knowledge: Making climate data and risks transparent and accessible to foster informed participation.
- Equitable Climate Finance: Prioritising financial resources for vulnerable and working-class communities.
- Universal Social Protection and Gender Justice: Integrating social protection and gender-responsive policies in all transition frameworks.

He stressed the importance of policies moving beyond unregulated resource extraction, with community consent and broad stakeholder consultations being crucial to building trust and legitimacy. He called for institutional collaboration between research centres and government departments in data sharing and policy development.

Thematic Session

Mrs. Ruchi Chaudhary, Program Manager, CANSA, moderated the session and framed key discussion points:

- The need to broaden the understanding of Just Transition beyond energy shifts to include economic diversification, disaster response, and systemic transformations.
- Addressing the lack of a unified definition of justice in transition across various governance platforms.
- Aligning Just Transition discussions with national climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, embedding justice and equity within these frameworks.

Mr. Nakul Sharma, Program Coordinator, CANSA, presented on India's current NDC implementation status, highlighting that Just Transition is embedded in global climate policy since the Paris Agreement (2015). He noted India's anticipated NDC 3.0 submission timeline and emphasized the opportunity to integrate justice, equity, and inclusion across mitigation, adaptation, and workforce strategies in national and subnational planning.

Ms. Shivika Solanki from Vasudha Foundation shared perspective on Just Transition at the subnational level, focusing on:

- State-level efforts to align with national decarbonization targets and climate action plans incorporating energy transitions and resilience.
- Emerging challenges, including job risks linked to fossil fuel phaseout, energy access gaps, need for reskilling, revenue impacts on coal-dependent regions, and environmental externalities.
- The importance of integrated multisectoral climate action and convergence among initiatives across gender, disaster resilience, mitigation, and energy sectors.
- Examples of leadership in other Indian states such as Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Regarding Odisha:

- It has been a frontrunner in climate budgeting since 2020.
- The 2024-25 state budget allocated ₹20,000 crore for climate-relevant programs across multiple departments.
- Renewable energy targets include achieving 10 GW by 2030.
- State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) emphasize just transition in energy, forestry, and community sectors.
- Presence of institutions supporting capacity-building is strong.

This session examined national progress and limitations on Just Transition and highlighted Odisha's efforts to integrate livelihoods, resilience, and governance reforms into transition strategies.

Session on Just transition in the state of Odisha

Moderated by **Dr. Swayamprabha Das**, Development Alternatives, this session included insights from Mr. Kamal Lochal Mishra, Executive Director, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority, on institutional challenges and the importance of system-wide integration for climate action. Key points included:

- Policy implementation depends on integration at departmental levels with clear mandates for climate action.
- Development of institutional frameworks with clear guidelines and measurable indicators is necessary, akin to disaster management systems.
- Lessons from past disasters like the 1999 Super Cyclone emphasize planning, coordination, and decentralised implementation.
- Success in climate response is linked to governance commitment and innovation, not merely resource availability.
- Odisha's Disaster Assistance Monitoring and Payment System provides real-time, transparent compensation tracking, improving accountability.
- Odisha's approach integrates adaptation into climate planning by piloting recovery frameworks such as the International Recovery Platform (IRP).



Audience Questions & Responses

Q1: Preparation for Climate Impact on Coastal Energy Infrastructure

- ✓ Odisha's Vision 2036–2047 prioritises disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- ✓ Vulnerability assessments by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure informed resilience measures such as underground cabling in cyclone-prone zones.

Q2: Policy Frameworks for Resilient Infrastructure

- ✓ Odisha includes disaster management as a standalone chapter in its vision document.
- ✓ A Disaster Risk Reduction Roadmap is under development focusing on resilient built environment planning.

Q3: Water Systems and Extreme Rainfall

- ✓ Altered rainfall patterns pose flood risks due to limited river carrying capacity.
- ✓ Implementation of climate-resilient irrigation and community water management schemes support agricultural sustainability.

Examples of Climate-Resilient Innovations in Odisha:

1. Recirculatory Aquaculture System for water-efficient fish farming.
2. Computerised Drip Irrigation for optimised water use in vulnerable districts.
3. Climate-resilient poultry housing ensuring hygienic, controlled environments.

Open House: Reflections and Insights

Representatives from civil society, research institutions, youth groups, and academia contributed the following:

- Individual responsibility in reducing resource use complements government initiatives. Local species must be prioritized in afforestation efforts.
- Agriculture's contribution to emissions requires practices reform for sustainable water use and emission reduction.
- The state's economic reliance on mining presents challenges in aligning revenue sources with climate goals.
- Water resource management needs strengthening, emphasizing infrastructure for groundwater recharge and community engagement.
- Decentralised climate action and awareness are critical, especially for the large rural population dependent on agriculture.
- Odisha's globally recognized strength in disaster preparedness should be leveraged to enhance long-term climate adaptation governance.
- Cooperative governance involving communities, civil society, and government is necessary for effective climate response.
- Economic planning must integrate ecological constraints, particularly in coastal zones, embedding such principles in Vision 2036.
- Climate budgeting processes require simplification, transparency, decentralization, and community engagement for effective execution.
- Monitoring mechanisms with clear indicators and accountability are needed to ensure climate budget utilisation.
- Transition towards a Green GDP framework, which includes environmental costs, should be prioritised, alongside strengthening local climate data systems.

Key Recommendations for Just Transition in Odisha

1. Adopt Nature-Based Approaches: Emphasise ecosystem-based adaptation and traditional ecological knowledge over purely technical climate control strategies.
2. Simplify and Democratise Climate Science: Make climate information accessible to citizens through participatory approaches.
3. Enhance Participatory Climate Budgeting: Decentralise climate and gender budgets to include local governance bodies with institutionalized monitoring.
4. Address Land Use and Urban Expansion: Ensure safeguards before large-scale land conversion for infrastructure or industrial purposes.

5. Promote Intergenerational Justice and Youth Leadership: Include youth actively in climate governance and prioritise equity across generations.
6. Engage MSMEs: Integrate micro, small, and medium enterprises into energy transition and resilience planning, supporting green practices.
7. Prioritise Labour and Community: Focus on reskilling, social security for workers, and support for climate-affected communities, especially in coastal areas.
8. Foster Regional Collaboration: Encourage South-South knowledge exchange on youth leadership, community adaptation, and climate justice.
9. Build on Odisha's Institutional Strengths: Leverage experience in disaster risk reduction to advance a just transition vision that centers local communities and integrates ecology with economic planning.

The consultation concluded with a vote of thanks extended to government representatives, experts, participants, and Utkal University for their valuable contributions towards the successful achievement of the meeting's objectives.