



Zeenat Niazi (VP, DA) as a panelist at World Circular Economy Forum 2019

Zeena Niazi (Vice President, Development Alternatives) was invited at the World Circular Economy Forum 2019 (WCEF2019) to discuss the economic potential of the circular built environment, in Helsinki, Finland from 3rd to 5th June, 2019. The WCEF brings together key circular economy practitioners from across the world. The WCEF2019, a global initiative of Finland and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, had a strong emphasis on the next era of the circular economy and scaling up the transition. This involves growing investments into circular economy businesses, spreading and adopting new technologies and making significant regulatory changes that enable the circular economy to flourish.

Zeenat participated in two panel discussions during the event. The first panel - Building an enabling environment for circular businesses - focused on examining and share stories of early successes in the transition to circularity of businesses that have been helped by fair and enabling environments. It also explored the options and lessons for scaling up such conditions at the global level. While asserting the relevance of MSMEs in the circular businesses, Zeenat talked about the challenges local green enterprises face in the ability to capture market, access technical inputs, finance and other support services. She also emphasised on the need for quality enhancement for small enterprises. She said, going forward, it would be essential to look at products which are reusable and have longer life and thus moving away from mineral based products to bio based ones.

The second panel discussion on June 4 - Circular economy in construction – focused on the regional characteristics of circularity in the built environment. Panelists discussed how built environment is the biggest consumer of natural resources globally and has enormous economic potential in the circular economy. They also emphasised that Circular processes provide business opportunities at all the different stages of the building life cycle.

Later, she also participated at Sustainable Building and Construction Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Meeting (SBC-MAC) of the UN One Planet Network at Amsterdam from 6th to 8th June, 2019. The Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme aims at improving the knowledge of sustainable construction and to support and mainstream sustainable building solutions. Through the programme, all major sustainable construction activities can be brought together under the same umbrella. The work involves sharing good practices, launching implementation projects, creating cooperation networks and committing actors around the world to sustainable construction.