



Marshalls

Creating Better Spaces

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Marshalls Co-Hosts India's

First Seminar on Sandstone Stewardship

Marshalls is co-hosting Indian's first 'Seminar on Developing a Roadmap on Sandstone Stewardship in India' later this week in New Delhi, India (18th of November, 2016). The half-day seminar is part of a wider three-day conference on 'India and Sustainability Standards: International Dialogues & Conference 2016' (1) at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi which will explore the role of the private sector in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The event is organized and hosted by the Centre for Responsible Business and supported by various agencies and organisation, including Marshalls.

Marshalls' Group Marketing Director, Chris Harrop, is delighted that the event is supported and attended by the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries and the Federation of Mining Associations of Rajasthan. He said, "Having pushed for the sandstone sector to be firmly on the agenda at this important conference I am pleased that Shir Prithul Kumar, Director of the Ministry of Mines, Government of India, will be making opening remarks at the seminar along with Shir Akshaydeep Mathur, Secretary General, Federation of Mining Associations of Rajasthan. Together with other speakers and participants the scene is set for frank discussions and the development of a collaborative roadmap on sandstone stewardship."

Business & Human Rights Lead for Marshalls, Elaine Mitchel-Hill, said, “Marshalls’ work in India over 14 years means that we have a huge interest in working in collaboration to ensure that the sandstone sector is fit to compete on the world stage. Many types of Indian sandstone are technically some of the best in the world and offer designers a huge pallet of colours. But we cannot ignore the challenges that we have faced in India as a UK-based business over a number of year, and continue to face, especially in the light of the UK Modern Slavery Act. (2)”

She continued, “We have increasing levels of customer focus on ethical standards, legal requirements to meet regarding modern slavery, which includes child labour, and in our context a child is defined by the ILO as 18, as quarries are hazardous environments. As a business we can do much to help ensure that we uphold human rights, promote labour rights, works against corruption and preserve the environment. But we can’t do this alone. Governments must ensure that the laws are upheld. UN agencies, NGO’s, bodies, associations and civil society have their part to play also. We are also acutely aware that this is a sector where ‘Greenwash’ or as we put it ‘Ethicons’ are also prevalent. Shining a light on the issues in the sector at events such as this are a good way of encouraging greater transparency across the industry.”

Bimal Arora, CEO, at the Centre for Responsible Business, added “Let us look at Sustainable Development Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals, (3) for a moment; little will happen if we do not work together. Achieving the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda requires a revitalized and enhanced global partnership that brings together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizes all available resources. We know that Marshalls has been actively engaged in the elimination of child labour in the sector for a number of years now, together with other core human rights work including labour standards. I warmly welcome the organisations engagement as a co-host at this years’ event which I believe will be a key platform for driving sustainability standards for the sector moving forward.”

Mitchel-Hill continued by saying, “Our experience here in India over many years has shown us that together we can make good progress. For example, we continue to work very closely with our sole supplier to improve labour conditions, promote health and safety within our supply chain, protect and support human rights, especially the elimination of child labour, which often presents huge challenges which are inextricably linked to the need for systemic and transformational change.

None of this can be done in any meaningful way unless the state, private sector and third sector all work together”.

Harrop continued saying that Marshalls has a sustainable business model and the organisations core purpose is ‘Creating Better Spaces’ for everyone; socially, environmentally & economically. He added that the corporate values of ‘leadership’, ‘excellence’, ‘trust’ and ‘sustainability’ sit together with the public commitments that Marshalls has made as UNGC signatory; to uphold the principles underpinned by the four pillars of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

He concluded by saying, “Marshalls is absolutely committed to making a valuable contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a broad consensus that governments on their own will not be able to meet these goals, however, there are key roles that government ministries, department and agencies need to play to ensure that business can operate efficiently and effectively to help meet these goals. The purpose of this ‘Seminar on Developing a Roadmap on Sandstone Stewardship in India’ is to begin a dialogue and map out how we can work together to bring about meaningful change.”

ENDS

Reference/Source:

- (1) India Sustainability Standards Conference - <http://www.sustainabilitystandards.in/>
- (2) UK Government Modern Slavery Act - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>
- (3) Sustainable Development Goal 17 - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

Editors Notes:

- Marshalls became a UNGC signatory in 2009 and a member of the UNGC UK Network later the same year. The organisation is required to report on its progress each year in Marshalls UNGC Communication on Progress Report (COP). You can view the most recent COP at www.marshalls.co.uk
- Marshalls was one of the first organisations to publish its Modern Slavery & Anti-Trafficking Policy Statement earlier this year - <http://www.marshalls.co.uk/documents/policies/Marshalls%20Modern%20Slavery%20Policy%20and%20Disclosure%20Statement.pdf>