**Session: The Un-plastic Economy**

**Date: 28 August 2019**

**Duration: 1.5hrs**

**Format: Panel discussion**

**Background**

India has announced its commitment to eliminate all single-use plastic in the country by 2022. The pledge is very ambitious as India is a populous country with rising per capita consumption of plastics.

Plastic is a ubiquitous material and its useful properties make it indispensable to modern-day living. However, its cheap availability and widespread application in single-use products have created a huge challenge, world over, in the ocean and land environment. Today, ineffective management and changing policy landscapes are compelling countries to take urgent action to tackle plastic waste. Global actions to combat plastic pollution are taking place in 60 nations around the world.

United Nations Environment (UNE) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have joined hands in the Un-Plastic Initiative (UPI) with industry, investors and the government to galvanize action to beat plastic pollution. This initiative stems from a high-level CEOs Roundtable on Beat Plastic Pollution that was held in Mumbai in May 2018. Private sector and investors are the front-runners in the Un-Plastic Initiative.

The word 'un-plastic' specifically alludes to removing plastic, which, in practical terms would imply the use of alternative materials. The initiative entails a commitment by businesses, investors, national and sub-national governments, NGOs, not only to reducing the use of plastics (by better management of waste) or making them compostable, recyclable, biodegradable, but by promoting the search/use of alternative materials. While recycling plastics is desirable, technical considerations limit its scope, supporting and emphasizing the imperative to search for alternatives.

The session will focus on commitments made by stakeholders in the UPI and progress made so far. The session will also walk the audience through Indian and European regulations dealing with plastics, and future trends on solutions based on alternative to plastics, by industry experts.

Reference:

* Detailed Action Plan: UNE-CII Un-plastic Initiative