

## SUNITA NARAIN

DG, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi

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Sunita Narain is a Delhi-based environmentalist and author. She is currently the Director General of the Center for Science and Environment (<https://www.cseindia.org/>) and Editor of the biweekly magazine, Down To Earth (<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/>).

Narain plays an active role in policy formulation on issues of environment and development in India and globally. She has worked extensively on climate change, with a particular interest in advocating for an ambitious and equitable global agreement. Her work on air pollution, water and waste management as well as industrial pollution has led to an understanding of the need for affordable and sustainable solutions in countries like India where the challenge is to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth. Narain's work is also to research the interaction between food and the environment. Her interest is to ensure that countries in the Southern world do not adopt highly chemical intensive agricultural systems as they do not have the capacity to mitigate and manage the toxic fallout on the environment and human health. One of her key efforts most recently has been to combine her knowledge, experience, and know how to demonstrate the benefits of organic food and its impact on health and climate through town hall meetings. These meetings provide cooking demonstrations by leading chefs in front of large audiences from all walks of life as an effort to share insight with the general public on issues of food, health, and climate change.

She was a member of the Indian Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change and has been awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honor. In 2005, the Centre for Science and Environment was awarded the Stockholm Water Prize under her leadership. In 2016, Time Magazine listed her as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. She received "The Order of the Polar Star" award from the Swedish Government in 2017. Narain also received the Edinburgh Medal 2020 conferred by the City of Edinburgh Council in the UK. The medal citation recognizes Narain's strong leadership in championing climate justice for the poor and disenfranchised.

Narain began working with the Centre for Science and Environment in 1982, working with the founder Anil Agarwal while completing her studies at the University of Delhi. In 1985, she co-edited the State of India's Environment report and then went on to study issues related to forest management. For this project, she travelled across the country to understand people's management of natural resources. In 1989, Narain and Agarwal wrote 'Towards Green Villages' on the subject of local democracy and sustainable development. In her years at the Centre, Narain has studied the relationship between Environment and development, and worked to create public consciousness about the need for sustainable development. In 2012, she wrote the 7th State of India's Environment Reports, Excreta Matters, an analysis of urban India's water supply and pollution.

Narain's research interests are wide-ranging: from global democracy, with a special focus on climate change, to the need for local democracy, where she has worked both on forest-related resource management and water-related issues.

Narain also appeared alongside Leonardo DiCaprio in the documentary *Before The Flood* and talked about the impact of climate change on the Monsoon in India and how it affects farmers' communities. Narain's efforts in combating climate change are conjoined with evidence-based research in working with businesses and multi-stakeholders; she advocates the point that any action undertaken by stakeholders has to be well thought through to avoid any potential fall outs that may negatively affect people and the planet.