



## NPC India-SR Asia cohost conference

**T**he National Productivity Council (NPC), India, and SR Asia jointly organized an international conference on Socially Responsible Products and Services for Sustainable Asia and Beyond, 18–19 October, in New Delhi. The conference was supported by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry-Aditya Birla CSR Centre for Excellence; Center for Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI), the Netherlands; CSR Europe; Global Compact Network India; and Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.

Minister of State, Agriculture, Food Processing Industries and Parliamentary Affairs of India Harish Rawat inaugurated the conference. He commented that society and the business community were at a crossroads between pursuing sustainable, inclusive growth and an unsustainable future. The former required innovative business models that nurtured the inclusion of communities. He added, “There is a big gap between intellect and labor in rural professions. It is essential that we capitalize on the emerging market based entrepreneurial initiative in the agricultural sector, even more so for poor farmers and farmers in disadvantaged areas.” Minister Rawat hoped that corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives would act as “a much-needed catalyst for development, diffusion, and use of new and economically useful knowledge, with enhanced innovation processes.”

The participants and eminent speakers represented government, policymakers, industry, and voluntary organizations. The speakers included Additional Director General, Ministry of Finance, Manoj Arora; Senior Adviser to the United Nations Global Compact Dr. Uddesh Kohli; NPC

Deputy Director General Dr. S.K. Chakravorty; and Bart Slob of the CBI. A message from APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki was read by NPC Deputy Director Sunil Kumar.



*Minister Rawat (3rd R) unveiling the SR Asia Journal during the conference. Photo courtesy of SR Asia.*

The Chief Guest also released the *SR Asia Magazine* and a booklet titled CBI Capacity Building Programme on CSR. The booklet is based on a CBI pilot project and contains information on the companies and CBI consultants involved in CSR implementation in Indian SMEs in various sectors. The study provides interesting insights into the workings of some of the most successful SMEs in India and their business practices.

The conference concluded that social responsibility (SR) is a key factor in the long-term success and sustainability of any enterprise, an awareness that is growing especially among those interested in exporting to developed markets. It will be imperative to consolidate SR measures by introducing guidelines. Positive responses by enterprises will create widespread awareness that SR initiatives can result in immense, sustainable benefits for society. 