

Report on Launching of UNEP-GEF Project in Gujarat

Gujarat Biodiversity Board, Gandhinagar and National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai have jointly launched UNEP-GEF-Biodiversity Project on 'Strengthening Implementation of Biological Diversity Act and Rules with Focus on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Provisions' on Tuesday, the 7th February, 2012 at Gandhinagar. The Project launching declaration was done by Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Development, Forests & Environment Department, Government of Gujarat, Shri Mangubhai Patel. He emphasised the potential and need of conservation of Biodiversity of Gujarat in different Eco-systems and Agro-climatic Zones. He further focused on need of development and benefit sharing of Biological Resources for the betterment of the local people and the environment. The guest of honour Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai gave a detail account of Biodiversity conventions and its policy framework at International level. He is the authority in the field of Biodiversity and sustainable development, Biodiversity and laws, Bio-diplomacy and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) at International level. He has been instrumental in getting this project to the 5 states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and West Bengal on the pilot basis to set the guidelines, manuals and standards for the Implementation of the provisions of Biological Diversity Act, 2002. He is the National Project Director of this Project and is also coordinating Cop-11 going to be held in October, 2012 at Hyderabad in India in which 193 member nations are participating. Shri B.N. Srivastava, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Chairman, Gujarat Biodiversity Board, Gandhinagar presented the details of Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP-GEF Project and elaborated about BMC Formation, PBR Preparation, BHS declaration, implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, implementation of the new project on Access and Benefit Sharing and activities & outcomes of the Project. Shri Pradeep Khanna, IFS, PCCF & HoFF, spoke about the need of conservation & development of Biodiversity in Gujarat State and the achievements like Gir lion conservation, various forest types and species protection and development. Dr. A.P. Singh, IFS, Member Secretary, Gujarat Biodiversity Board, welcomed the guests,

delegates and gave the brief account of the project and an unique Biodiversity of Gujarat like Keshar Mango, Ishabgul, Jeera, Gugal, Kuchchhi Khajur, Banni grassland, Banni Buffalo, Gir Lion, Wild Ass, Gir & Kankarej Cow, Kathiyawadi Horse, Jafrabadi and Mehsani buffalo, Dangi Cow etc. which are the pride of Gujarat need conservation and development. Shri B.J. Nayak, DCF, Gujarat Biodiversity Board proposed vote of thanks. The programme was attended approximately by 250 officers of Forests, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries Departments, Universities, Scientists, Science Colleges, NGOs, Sarpanches of village panchayats, Chairman and Members of Biodiversity Management Committees from different districts.

An exhibition was also arranged at the venue site of launching the project. The exhibition depicted various ecosystems, forest type, species diversity and matter relating to implementation of the Act. A Brochure was prepared for this event in both English & Gujarati. Participants were given literature on Biological Diversity Act & Rules and brief of the new project. Utilization Certificate of the funds of Rs. One Lakh received for launching this project has also been submitted to NBA vide this office letter no. GBB/UNEP-GEF/86/784/2011-12 dated 22/03/2012. The relevant 11 photographs of the programme and brief of the project are attached herewith.

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