Press Release

National Conference on 'Towards Resilient Eco systems: The role of Forestry Research'

8 & 9 May 2018, IFGTB, Coimbatore

Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) in the City is organizing a two day National Conference on '**Towards Resilient Ecosystems: The role of Forestry Research'**. This conference was inaugurated on 8 May 2018 by **Sh. Siddhanta Das, IFS, Director General of Forests & Special Secretary , Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF &CC), Govt of India.** The inaugural session began with welcome address of **Dr. Mohit Gera IFS, Director, IFGTB** which was followed by a brief overview of the conference. He highlighted the likely impacts of climate change on India's Forests and briefly presented the objective and critical issues to be deliberated during the conference.

Dr. S.D. Sharma, Dy. Director General (Research) mentioned in his address during the conference that this National conference on 'Towards Resilient Ecosystems: Role of Forestry Research' is the 1st in the series of Regional and National conferences initiated by ICFRE since last year. He added further that the climate change earlier it was showed to be deceptive call by all but now seeing is believing. The changing patter of flowering in the trees, the shifting of the trees to higher attitudes, rising temperatures, retreading glaciers, erratic snowfall and rainfall pattern and similar many studies were proved that climate is really happening. All the major Forests of India ranging from coastal belts to alpine forests and desert areas with its characteristic species are likely to be impacted by the projected climate change, thus he added.

Dr. S.C. Gairola IFS, Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) , Dehra Dun has pointed out in his key note address that Forests present a significant global carbon stock accumulated through growth of trees and an increase in soil carbon and store more than 250 giga tones of carbon worldwide. Rehabilitation and sustainable management of Forests can increase the forest carbon stocks whereas deforestation and degradation results in reduction of carbon stocks. It was estimated that 0.22 giga tones are decreasing annually due to reduction of forests globally. Climate change is the big challenge for developing counties like India and will impact the key sectors like agriculture, health, water and forestry. Forests ecosystems are acting as sinks for CO2 which

is the most abundant green house gas in the atmosphere. Fragmentation and diversion of Forest land for non forestry purposes are the main source of CO2 emissions whereas forestry sector plays significant role to reduce CO2 emissions and remove accumulated CO2 from the atmosphere by sequestration in vegetation as well as soil.

Currently management approaches are being proposed that intend to mitigate climate change by enhancing forest carbon stocks and foster adaptation by maintaining compositionally and structurally complex forests. To reduce vulnerability of climate change the mitigation programmes and adaptive practices could be incorporated in the forest research programmes. He further added that ICFRE has brought out a National REDD – plus strategy and submitted to Government so that the country's forests can reap the benefit of REDD- Plus framework which aims to reward forest communities for forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of carbon stocks. He also emphasized that Climate change impact and vulnerability assessment at National, State and Regional level is necessary to develop adaptation strategies for forests .

Sh. Siddhanta Das IFS Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEFF & CC in his inaugural address said that according to the 5th assessment report of intergovernmental panel on climate change the average global surface temperature is likely to rise in the range of 1.5 to 4.5 °C by the end of 21st century. This is expected to cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate systems during this century and which are very likely to be more severe than observed the last century.

He added that public concern over climate change led to the establishment of intergovernmental panel on climate change in 1988. He also mentioned about the Paris agreement in 2015 which reaffirmed the goal of limiting global temperature increase well below 2 °C above pre industrial level while urging efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. Through this Paris agreement the countries also agreed to a long term goal to increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience while reducing their Green house Gas emissions. In recognization of the growing problem of Climate change, India declared a voluntary goal of reducing the emission intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35% over 2005 levels by 2030.

Sh. Siddhanta Das also made a brief presentation on strategy for sequestration of additional 2.5 to 3.0 billion tons in Forests of 2030 by facilitating incremental carbon stocks in forests and meeting the shortfall through catchment Area treatment of all major rivers and by planting trees outside Forests.

He also informed that Green India Mission also aims to increase the forest & tree cover of the country to the extent of 5 mha and improve quality of forest & tree cover on another 5 mha of forest lands along with providing livelihood support. It is expected to enhance carbon sequestration by about 100 million tones CO2 equivalent annually. He further highlighted the potential of road side plantations to enhance the green cover of nation and generate employment opportunities for rural community. He also informed that a new holistic approach for rejuvenation of rivers with forestry interventions has been also initiated for river Ganga wherein water and environment management have been taken together for implementation to restore the lost ecology of the polluted stretches of the rivers.

He has given some examples of likely climate change impacts on forests of India of which in Sikkim many bird species have shifted their range to the extent up to 700m upwards along the elevation gradients. In Arunachal Pradesh the phenological changes n some floral species like Rhododendron have been reported. He also added that Forests in Himachal Pradesh particularly in the Districts of Chamba, Kullu, Shimla, Kangra and Mandi are reported to be most vulnerable to the changing climate by 2030.

At the end of the inaugural programme of the Conference **Dr. S. Murugesan** Group –Co-ordinator (Reserach) and Convener of the Conference has delivered vote of thanks