

Colloquium on Biodiversity: Earth's Most Valuable Resource

Why does it matter to business?

The year 2010 has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Biodiversity. There are in fact suggestions to actually extend this to make it an International Decade of Biodiversity. A globally concerted effort needs to be made to substantially reduce biodiversity loss.

Mr. Ravi Sharma, Director – Implementation, Technical Support & Outreach, Convention for Biological Diversity Secretariat, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) delivering the Keynote Address at the Colloquium on Biodiversity: Earth's most valuable resource- Why does it matter to Business, organized by CII-ITC-Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development and Wildlife Institute of India, asserted that as per the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment species extinction rates have become manifold and are a cause of serious concern. He pointed out that the biggest challenge to biodiversity conservation is that most of the stakeholders do not understand the extent to which they actually rely on natural resources/ nor are they aware of the effects of their reliance. The good news however, is that over the years there has been an increasing interest in environmental issues and more and more companies have started reporting about their environmental impacts.

Mr. I. K. Pande, Chairman, 3rd State Finance Commission & Former Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand asserted that since biodiversity is in a crisis situation, people have risen to the occasion and are now trying to forge partnerships to undo the damage that has already been done.

In his welcome note, Mr. B L Raina, Chairman, Jamshedpur Utilities & Services Company said that in a world of increasing globalization and environmental degradation, conserving biodiversity is in fact one of the greatest challenges. One cannot be expected to put restrictions on the aspirations of countries for economic development but one however needs to practice the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Mr. P R Sinha, Director, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in his opening remarks said that this is the first opportunity that WII has collaborated with the business community and is looking forward to undertaking a collaborative approach on biodiversity conservation with CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Rajiv Berry, Chairman, CII Uttarakhand State Council giving the concluding remarks stated that for all of humankind the loss of biodiversity diminishes the quality of life and profoundly affects the businesses.

The other panelist deliberated on the specific and significant aspects of Biodiversity as a business case and its conservation policy road map. Some of the other key panelist included Dr. Nik Senapati, Managing Director, Rio Tinto India, Mr. Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO, WWF – India and Dr. V B Mathur, Dean, Wildlife Institute of India.

The colloquium was supported by WWF – India as Partner Institution and sponsored by Rio Tinto India and Kingfisher Airlines.

Dehradun
27 April 2010