



Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Conference on “Sustainable Landscapes & Forest Ecosystems: Theory to Practice” Environment Minister launches “Wood is Good” Campaign

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Emphasising the need to create an enabling environment through small steps such as planting more trees, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has said that new and innovative ways must be thought of, to bring more areas under forest and tree cover. Inaugurating a two-day conference on “Sustainable landscapes and forest ecosystems: Theory to Practice” here today, the Environment Minister urged the gathering to deliberate and come out with out-of-the-box ideas and solutions on increasing the forest cover much beyond the stipulated 33 per cent. “Innovation is the need of the hour. Innovation co-efficient now is more important than any other co-efficient”, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said.

Reiterating the Government’s commitment to increase the country’s forest cover from 24% to 33% of the geographical area and creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons of CO2 equivalent in forests, as reflected in Nationally Determined Contribution, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that the target is proposed to be achieved through a number of planned afforestation drives and initiatives. The Minister advocated the balancing of environmental and developmental concerns and also urged the gathering of scientists and foresters to devise a solution to the problem of weeds.

Referring to the forests being an integral part of Indian culture and tradition, the Environment Minister said that India has managed to successfully conserve and enhance its forest resources. He reminded the gathering that our ancestors had given us clean air and clean water and we must make efforts to preserve them for the future generations.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched the “Wood is Good” campaign on the occasion. Wood is a climate-friendly material, as it is a renewable resource, having zero carbon footprint.

The Partnership for Land Use Science (Forest-Plus) is a joint programme by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to strengthen capacity for REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) implementation in India. The programme brings together experts from India and the United States to develop technologies, tools and methods of forest management to meet the technical challenges of managing forests for the health of ecosystem, carbon stocks, biodiversity and livelihood. Some of the objectives of the conference include – exploring issues and opportunities for ecosystem approach to land management in India; discussing how the approaches and tools developed under the Forest-PLUS programme can be used to improve forest management in India and to document and disseminate that learning with a wider group.

Director General, Forest and Special Secretary, MoEFCC, Mr. Siddhanta Das, Mission Director, USAID India, Mr. White, USAID Director for Energy & Environment, officers of the MOEF&CC, Inspector General, MoEF&CC, Ms. Rekha Pai, State Forest Departments and representatives of national institutes and Non-Governmental Organisations were among the distinguished ones present in the gathering.

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