



# ‘Discuss Laws on Wildlife with a Modern and Scientific Outlook’: Dr. HARSH Vardhan Environment Minister Inaugurates Global Wildlife Programme; Releases National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2031

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Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has appealed to the fraternity of wildlife experts and scientists to deliberate on various wildlife-related laws with a modern and scientific outlook. “If you can blend science and technology to the cause of wildlife, it will produce a drastic difference to the outcome of the Conference”, the Minister said. Inaugurating the Global Wildlife Programme here today, Dr. Harsh Vardhan emphasised that modern technology must be used to counter poachers and wildlife crimes. He pointed out that the effort has always been to resolve all issues related to wildlife in a harmonious manner. The Minister said that India has the largest participation of people living in the forests towards conservation efforts. Referring to the National Wildlife Action Plan released today, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that the NWAP has been made landscape-based, rather than sanctuary, or national park-based. The Minister urged the students to become strong ‘Eco-messengers’ in the society.

Two documents – India’s National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP) for the period 2017-2031 and Secure Himalaya were released on the occasion. The Plan focuses on preservation of genetic diversity and sustainable development. The NWAP has five components, 17 themes, 103 conservation actions and 250 projects. The five components are – strengthening and promoting the integrated management of wildlife and their habitats; adaptation to climate change and promoting integrated sustainable management of aquatic biodiversity in India; promoting eco-tourism, nature education and participatory management; strengthening wildlife research and monitoring of development of human resources in wildlife conservation and enabling policies and resources for conservation of wildlife in India. The Plan will help to mainstream wildlife conservation in development planning processes. The Minister also launched the India Wildlife Mobile App to mark the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Ajay Narayan Jha pointed out that the Conference will provide a platform to build strategic partnerships between all the 19 nations and enable India to strengthen its enforcement mechanism to control wildlife trafficking. Shri Jha also said that the nations will learn from each other on strengthening peoples’ participation. The Environment Secretary emphasised that some new action issues have been considered in the Third National Wildlife Action Plan. These issues include – climate change and wildlife, wildlife health, inland, coastal and marine conservation and wildlife conflict mitigation.

Some of the issues that will be discussed during the Conference are – leveraging partnerships to promote shared benefits on public-private partnerships and opportunities in wildlife-based tourism that help promote wildlife conservation; inclusive growth infrastructure for wildlife conservation and ways to mitigate impacts of infrastructure in wildlife and innovative approaches to engage people in wildlife conservation.

Senior Biodiversity specialist, Global Environment Facility (GCF), Dr. Jaime Cavelier, Country Director, UNDP-India, Ms. Marina Walter also addressed the gathering. Director General, Forest & Special Secretary in Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Siddhanta Das gave the welcome address, while IG, Forest, Shri Soumitra Dasgupta delivered the vote of thanks. An Indian Forest Service officer, Shri Sujoy Bannerjee gave a Live performance of the theme song. Students and teachers from various schools, and representatives of NGOs were among those present in the gathering.

Earlier in the day, the delegates from GWP countries visited Rajghat memorial to pay tributes to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

In another programme held earlier today at National Zoological Park to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti and Wildlife Week, 2017, around three hundred students from various schools of National Capital Region (NCR) participated.

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