



BIODIVERSITY News

From The Chairman's Desk

The year 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity needs to be observed with extreme seriousness and a solemn pledge to conserve and augment our diverse resources—the natural heritage. The rich biodiversity of this state ranging from sub-himalayan belt to sea coast responsible for sustenance of life is facing rapid depletion as consequences of unplanned growth including population explosion, urbanization and consequently climate change and greenhouse effect in addition to periodic natural disasters. At this crucial phase rigorous adherence to strategies for documentation, conservation and judicious utilization of our resources along with regular awareness programmes at all levels are called for as top priority measures. One of the strategies to meet partially the challenge is to establish bio-resource centers as done by National Bio-resource Development Board, at different geoclimatic zones of this subcontinent including stress areas as well. The resource centers in this state will be designed to cover not only species of medicinal, agricultural or commercial value but overexploited, highly endangered and novel species as well. In the development of these centres, the help of every citizen is desired. It is imperative that each centre should ensure the preservation of the harmonious relationship that exists between different components of the biosphere ranging from microbes to higher animals.

A. K. Sharma
Chairman, WBBB

The West Bengal Biodiversity Board observed the International Biological Diversity Day during a one day long programme on 22nd May, 2009. The theme this year as designated by the CBD was 'Invasive Alien Species'. Two field guides and three People's Biodiversity Registers were formally released on the occasion. Two lectures by Prof. T. J. Pandian, Madurai Kamaraj University and Dr. P. S. Ahuja, Director, Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology were delivered during the first technical session. The second technical session had representations by PBR activists from different districts of the State. An exhibition of posters prepared by the research scholars of the Board was set up. More than 180 participants including students, PBR volunteers, representatives of the constituted BMCs, NGOs, School, College and University teachers, distinguished Scientists and Officers participated in the day long programme.

International Year of Biodiversity

The United Nations has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. An year to probe into how much, we as citizens of this planet have achieved in terms of the '2010 Biodiversity Target' and to facilitate a worldwide concerted endeavour to emphasize the value of biodiversity in our lives. Nations worldwide have been invited to take action in 2010 to safeguard the variety of life on earth. The West Bengal Biodiversity Board has chalked out an year long programme to celebrate the same, with plans to organise District level Seminars, Workshops, Nature Study Camps and Competitions in different categories of photography, drawing, cartoon drawing, poster designing and slogan writing. The details will be available on the website of the Board shortly.



Celebration of Life on Earth



In accordance with The Biological Diversity Act, 2002, State Biodiversity Boards have been constituted in 22 States of India. The Boards have come together under the auspices of the National Biodiversity Authority and have met three times before. The West Bengal Biodiversity Board was given the opportunity to host

the 4th State Biodiversity Board Review Meeting. Various issues pertaining to the implementation of the act, its relevance in the present scenario of WTO and TRIPS and the issues arising thereof, access and benefit sharing mechanism, synergy with other relevant Indian legislations and defining of specific roles in the implementation process were discussed in the said meeting during 10th-11th September, 2009.



Traditional rice varieties in cultivation



In an attempt to Synergize The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the Protection of Plant Varieties & Farmer's Right Act, 2001, the West Bengal Biodiversity Board in collaboration with the Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya and the Agriculture Department, Govt. of West Bengal undertook to get Farmer's Variety Registration for 23 different traditional rice varieties from different districts of West Bengal by submitting relevant documents to the PPV & FR Authority, New Delhi within the stipulated time.