

**Inception Workshop on ICFRE-ICIMOD
Project on REDD+ in North-Eastern Himalayas
28-29 January 2016, Aizawl, Mizoram**

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, in collaboration with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal has initiated a project on “REDD-plus in North-Eastern Himalaya”, which is a part of the trans-boundary multi-country programme in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. An inception workshop on this project was organized on 28 - 29 January at Advance Centre for Research in Bamboos and Rattan (ARCBR), Aizawl in collaboration with Mizoram Forest Department. The objective of the workshop was to enable the participants from North Eastern States to understand various aspects of REDD plus. In addition, it provided basic information on technical aspects related to measurement of forest carbon stocks for developing inventories of forest ecosystems.

Delegates from North Eastern states and nearby academic institutions participated in the workshop besides the representatives from ICFRE, German International Cooperation (GIZ) and International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The programme focuses on south-south cooperation in the Himalayan nations of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar through sharing of REDD-plus experience and expertise.

Giving the inaugural address of the programme, Sh. L. Ralte, Hon'ble Minister of State, Environment and Forests, Soil and Water Conservation Co-operation, Labour, Employment & Industrial Training, Govt of Mizoram said that REDD plus programmes if implemented properly, have a great potential for improving the livelihood of forest dwelling communities, which can get benefits in terms of Payment for Environmental Services. He flagged the need of capacity building for various stakeholders of the forest. Hon'ble Minister thanked Government of India for choosing state of Mizoram and as a potential candidate state for implementing REDD-plus project. Sh. L.R. Thanga, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Mizoram informed that with new government initiatives, shifting cultivation area has been reduced. He said REDD+ initiatives will come a long way in providing financial incentives to the communities for their actions on forests conservation. There is a considerable scope for enhancement of carbon stocks in the forests of Mizoram, as about 60% forests of the state is under Open category.

Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Director General, ICFRE described the importance of REDD+ by highlighting the significance of Paris Agreement. He gave a brief account of ICFRE's engagement with the UNFCCC process and its role in REDD+ implementation in the country. He also highlighted the importance of capacity building in the process. He stressed that the synergy of Green India Mission with REDD-plus projects can be beneficial in mitigating climate

change. He emphasized that two types of publication should be prepared for catering the need of Technical Persons and the local communities.

Officers from North Eastern states while speaking in the plenary session, stressed on the coordination and cooperation between Village Councils and Forest Departments. Better options should be provided to the local communities for the improvement of their livelihood.

On 29 January, 2016, the field visit was conducted for the participants to Reiek Village, District Mamit, about 40 km from Aizawl. Interactions were held with the community members of village councils and Young Mizo Association (YMA) from the two villages, Reiek and Ailawng. Demography and livelihood pattern of two villages were studied by the participants. The community members mentioned that one multipurpose society is operational in Reiek for processing and packing of Turmeric. Peoples from different villages are migrating to Reiek village for better livelihood. Communities have shown the interest in cultivating bamboo and medicinal plants, if necessary support and subsidy are provided to them.



Inaugural Session chaired by Sh. L. Ralte, Hon'ble Minister of State, Environment and Forests, Soil and Water Conservation Co-operation, Labour, Employment & Industrial Training, Govt of Mizoram Minister



Plenary Session chaired by Dr Ashwani Kumar, Director General, ICFRE



Technical Presentations on ICFRE-ICIMOD REDD+ Project



Field visit to Village Reiek, District Mamit, Mizoram