

Speech of His Excellency Shri K. Sankaranarayanan, the Governor of Jharkhand on the occasion of Launching of India-UNDP Project on "Strengthening Institutional Structure to Implement the Biological Diversity Act" on 15th September,2009.

Hon'ble Union Minister of State Shri Jairam Ramesh, Chief Secretary, Jharkhand, Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, UNDP Country Director, Chairman National Biodiversity Authority, Secretary, Forest & Environment, Govt. of Jharkhand, representatives from Press and media, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to be amongst all of you on the Launching of India-UNDP Project on Strengthening Institutional Structures to Implement Biological Diversity Act in Jharkhand.

We all know that biodiversity is the key for life. It is gratifying that India as one of the mega diversity centers with unique floral and faunal heritage. Varied climatic and topographic realms of the country have supported enormous biological wealth along with its huge population. India is one of the signatories to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which has three objectives viz. conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of benefits accruing from their commercialization.

As our global commitment under CBD and also to address our own requirement, the Government of India has enacted the Biological Diversity Act which provides the legal mechanism for establishing sovereign rights over the Indian biodiversity, protection against misappropriation (biopiracy),

regulation of conservation and sustainable use of bio-diversity and associated knowledge and promotion of protection of biodiversity.

Further, a National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has been established to oversee the implementation of the Act at national, state and local levels and for providing advice to State and Central Governments in this respect.

The State of Jharkhand is very rich in biodiversity because of its diverse physiographic and climatic conditions. The State of Jharkhand has notified forests covering 29.6% of the total geographical area of the state. These forests for the most part conform to 4 types & form catchments of the three main rivers - Koel, Damodar and Subernekha. The State is also rich in wildlife. There are 11 sanctuaries and one national park in the state. Protected Areas, which are the cornerstone of biodiversity conservation and the natural habitats within them, can protect watersheds and regulate water flow, prevent soil erosion, influence rainfall regime, local climate and conserve genetic resources. Various ethnic groups such as Munda, Ho, Oraon, Santhal, Paharia, Chero, Birjea, Asura and other have influenced their eco-systems through varying practices of agriculture and pasture.

The State of Jharkhand has established the State Biodiversity Board (SBB) and further action for establishing the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) and preparation of Peoples' Biodiversity Register (PBR) is on in selected areas of the state. The primary focus of this project is to strengthen the capacity of the Jharkhand Biodiversity Board at State level and Biodiversity Management Committees at the village level that are directly involved in implementation of Biological Diversity Act. The project also envisages cooperation between government and academic institutions. The project will specifically be implemented in the areas rich in natural resources in selected districts of Jharkhand and will help in documentation and support to the ongoing conservation strategies and practices.

I complement Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India for implementing this project for strengthening the State Biodiversity Board & Biodiversity Management Committees through the support from UNDP. I also thank the Hon'ble Union Minister of Environment & Forests, for selecting Jharkhand as one of the states for implementation of this project and assure him of all assistance and support on behalf of state government to make this venture a success.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.