

Proceedings of Side Event
**“Issues and Challenges for Implementing
Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in India”**
held on 1st May 2017

UNFF-12 Session at UNHQ, New York,
USA



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Proceedings of Side Event “Issues and Challenges for Implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in India” held on 1st May, 2017

Background

Forests in India are primarily treated as Environmental and Social resource, only secondarily as commercial resource. The National Forest Policy of 1988 framed four years before Earth Summit embodies all elements of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). India is implementing SFM with strong policy, regulatory and institutional regime with the involvement of people. More than 300 million people are deriving their full or partial livelihood and sustenance needs from forests. India is able to arrest decrease in forest and tree cover for the last two decades but quality of forest is concern due to dependence of more than 300 million people. India is also committed for biodiversity including wildlife conservation and maintains around 5% of geographical area under Protected Area Network. Man-Animal Conflict and loss of corridors are real challenges.

Technical session

The technical session was moderated by Dr J V Sharma, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division, TERI.

The presentations were made by Dr J V Sharma, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division, TERI; Mr Sachin Raj Jain, Convener- Treasurer, Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), Noida ; Dr Yogesh Gokhale, Fellow, TERI and Dr Ashish Aggrawal, Fellow, TERI.

Dr J V Sharma Director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division, TERI stated that India’s traditional forest systems have always followed conservation based approaches. Indian technical forestry has helped in stabilizing the forest cover in the country. As the forest provides multiple benefits to the community and society and contributes significantly to the economic development of the nation. In India over 300 million people are directly or indirectly dependent on forests for their sustenance and livelihoods. Forests provide a unique opportunity to promote economic security, ecological security, food security, water security, energy security and in the whole process help to achieve sustainable development of the country. The current national forest policy enunciated in 1988 embodies all elements of sustainable forest management, a concept to which India is firmly committed. The policy places highest priority to the ecological and environmental stability, together with meeting the livelihood concerns of the people living in and around forests.

Mr Sachin Raj Jain, Convener- Treasurer, Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) highlighted the role and the status of the Forest Certification in India. He explained that in a country like India, which ranks seventh in terms of its geographical area and second in terms of its population in the world, faces several threats and pressures on its forest resources. He further stated that Forest Certification is a market based non-regulatory conservation tool designed to recognize and promote responsible forest management. Through certification, timber harvest planning and practices are evaluated by an independent third party, according to standards that address environmental protection as well as social and economic welfare. Mr Jain also explained the detailed process of Forest

Certification in India and the available Certification schemes. He then linked it to India’s INDC target of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. He ended his presentation highlighting the issues and challenges with the Forest Certification process in the country.

Dr Yogesh Gokhale, Fellow, TERI highlighted the linkages between sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation along with ways to synchronize the two in India. He explained that India harbors 7-8% of all recorded species in the world and is signatory to major international conventions that safeguard biodiversity directly or indirectly. He further stated that there is a need to link Global Forest Goals with National Biodiversity Targets of India.

Dr Ashish Aggarwal, Fellow, TERI focused his presentation and discussion on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s), mainly SDG 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 through Sustainable Forest Management.

Dr J V Sharma, Fellow, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division, TERI proposed the vote of thanks and concluded the event to be successful.

Key Findings of the Discussion:

In the light of the discussions, following points were taken into consideration:

1. There is need to generate political commitment and means of implementation (Finance, Capacity building and Technology) of SFM in India, and also in developing countries.
2. India’s new initiative for generating finance through CAMPA mechanism is not enough for implementing SFM. It needs finance from private and public sector. A mechanism to explore carbon financing must be explored.
3. Capacity of Forest Dependent Communities and frontline staff should be built in the context of forest governance, institutional strengthening and combating challenges.
4. Poverty Alleviation Program for Forest fringe villages must be dovetail with forest management activities.
5. Certification of Forests will help in identifying issues and challenges while implementing SFM.

Annexure 1. Agenda of the Workshop

Issues and Challenges for implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in India

Date: 1st May, 2017 Time: 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm

Agenda

Moderator : Dr J V Sharma, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity, TERI, New Delhi	
1.15 pm to 1.20 pm	Opening Remarks Representative from Government of India
1.20 pm to 1.35 pm	Sustainable Forest Management – Issues and Challenges in India Dr J V Sharma, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity, TERI, New Delhi
1.35 pm to 1.50 pm	Status of Forest Certification in India Mr Sachin Raj Jain, Convener- Treasurer, Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), Noida
1.50 pm to 2.05 pm	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Forest Management in India Dr Yogesh Gokhale, Fellow, TERI, New Delhi
2.05pm to 2.30 pm	Open Discussion
2.30 pm to 2.40 pm	Achieving SDGs through SFM in India Dr Ashish Aggarwal, Fellow, TERI, New Delhi
2.40 pm to 2.45 pm	Concluding Remarks Dr J V Sharma, Director, Forestry & Biodiversity, TERI, New Delhi