

World Environment Day (WED) 2015 and NERCORMP initiated towards environmental conservation

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World Environment Day is observed every year on 5 June to raise global awareness to take positive environmental action to protect nature and the planet Earth. The WED is carried out under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 on the day that United Nations Conference on the Human Environment began.

Every year the UNEP kept on particular theme to address the burning environmental issue and the theme this year (2015) is "**Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care.**" The well-being of humanity, the environment, and the functioning of the economy, ultimately depend upon the responsible management of the planet's natural resources. Evidence is building that people are consuming far more natural resources than what the planet can sustainably provide. Many of the Earth's ecosystems are nearing critical tipping points of depletion or irreversible change, pushed by high population growth and economic development. By 2050, if current consumption and production patterns remain the same and with a rising population expected to reach 9.6 billion, we will need three planets to sustain our ways of living and consumption. The WED theme this year is therefore "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care." Living within planetary boundaries is the most promising strategy for ensuring a healthy future. Human prosperity need not cost the earth. Living sustainably is about doing more and better with less. It is about knowing that rising rates of natural resource use and the environmental impacts that occur are not a necessary by-product of economic growth.

There is three main concerned globally i.e. water, energy and food, which are directly or indirectly affecting the environment. Efficient and sustainable management of these three basic resources without these human cannot live alone are play a vital role towards minimizing environmental damage and maintaining ecological sustainability.

Water

Even though households are relatively low consumers of water, population growth and expanded water use have outweighed the effect of water saving technology and behavior.

- Less than 3% of the world's water is fresh (drinkable), of which 2.5% is frozen in the Antarctica, Arctic and glaciers.

- Humanity must therefore rely on 0.5% for all of man's ecosystem's and fresh water needs.
- Man is polluting water faster than nature can recycle and purify water in rivers and lakes.
- More than 1 billion people still do not have access to fresh water.
- Excessive use of water contributes to the global water stress.
- Water is free from nature but the infrastructure needed to deliver it is expensive.

Energy

Despite technological advances that have promoted energy efficiency gains, energy use in OECD countries will continue to grow another 35% by 2020. Commercial and residential energy use is the second most rapidly growing area of global energy use after transport. In 2002 the motor vehicle stock in OECD countries was 550 million vehicles (75% of which were personal cars). A 32% increase in vehicle ownership is expected by 2020. At the same time, motor vehicle kilometres are projected to increase by 40% and global air travel is projected to triple in the same period.

- We can shift our consumption patterns towards goods and services with lower energy and material intensity without compromising quality of life.
- Households consume 29% of global energy and consequently contribute to 21% of resultant CO2 emissions. The cost of renewable energy is increasingly competitive with that derived from fossil fuels. One-fifth of the world's final energy consumption in 2013 was from renewables.
- Globally, energy consumption grew most quickly in the transport and service sectors, driven by rising passenger travel and freight transport, and a rapid expansion in the service economy.

Food

While substantial environmental impacts from food occur in the production phase (agriculture, food processing), households influence these impacts through their dietary choices and habits. This consequently affects the environment through food-related energy consumption and waste generation.

- 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year while almost 1 billion people go undernourished and another 1 billion hungry.
- Overconsumption of food is detrimental to our health and the environment.
 - 1.5 billion people globally are overweight or obese.

- Land degradation, declining soil fertility, unsustainable water use, overfishing and marine environment degradation are all lessening the ability of the natural resource base to supply food.
- The food sector accounts for around 30% of the world's total energy consumption and accounts for around 22% of total Greenhouse Gas emissions.
- Increased consumption adversely affects food security.
 - Increase in food prices.
 - Upsurge in production methods that use more resource-intensive food products.
 - Resource-intensive foods deplete the agro-ecological resource base, affecting its ability to produce plentiful food.

"Earth Anthem" by Abhay K

*Our cosmic oasis, cosmic blue pearl
 the most beautiful planet in the universe
 all the continents and the oceans of the world
 united we stand as flora and fauna
 united we stand as species of one earth
 black, brown, white, different colours
 we are humans, the earth is our home.*

The United Nations Secretary-General Message on World Environment Day, 5 June 2015.

The theme of this year's World Environment Day is "Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care". The goal of sustainable development is to increase the quality of life for all people without increasing environmental degradation, and without compromising the resource needs of future generations. We can do this by shifting our consumption patterns towards goods that use less energy, water and other resources, and by wasting less food. In this year of transformation, when we hope to see great advances on sustainable development and climate change, let us celebrate World Environment Day by becoming more conscious of our ecological impact. Let us think about the environmental consequences of the choices we make. Let us become better stewards of our planet.

Message by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme

Living in an increasingly globalized world, inhabited by 7 billion people, it is easy to underestimate the power of individual action. The annual World Environment Day reminds

people across the globe that it is our personal choices that shape the world around us. Our daily decisions as consumers, multiplied by billions, have a colossal impact on the environment – some of them contribute to the further depletion of natural resources, others help to protect fragile ecosystems. Every time - the choice is ours. The theme for this year's celebrations, Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care, emphasizes that personal responsibility each one of us bears for enabling inclusive and sustainable economic development while stabilizing and reducing the rate of resource use. Today, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are one of the major causes of the continued deterioration of the global environment. There is no doubt that the "great acceleration" of the last 50 years has seen a rapid transformation of the human relationship with the natural world – more so than in any other period in our history – with escalating use of natural resources leading to environmental degradation. We must ask ourselves what the consequences of this pace of consumption and trajectory of population growth—forecasted to reach nine billion by 2050—will be. Under current trends, global extraction of resources is set to reach 140 billion tonnes by 2050, compared to around 7 billion tonnes in 1900. This will probably exceed the availability and accessibility of resources, as well as the carrying capacity of the planet to absorb the impacts of their extraction and use. We simply cannot afford the waste, as resources are diminishing and prices are rising. But there is still time to transform the challenges of dwindling and finite resources into opportunities that will promote prosperous economies and a healthy planet for generations to come. I would like to invite everyone to imagine what the world would be like if each of the 7 billion people made one change towards a more responsible consumption of resources. I would like you to hold on to that vision and strive to make it reality—be it refusing to buy single-use plastic bags or riding a bike to work. WED is the opportunity for everyone to realize the responsibility to care for the Earth and to become agents of change.

NERCORMP ingenuities

Observing the importance of environment, "Community Conserved Areas" (CCAs) approach has been initiated across the NERCORMP (North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project) implementing areas of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya covering an area of about 2 lakhs hectares of land area, alike to "Indigenous and Community Conservation Areas" (ICCA) recognised in the IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC, Durban 2003) and the 6th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, Kuala Lumpur 2004). The CCA approach is viewed as a potential mechanism to conserve the rich biological resources of the forest in these states, where forest dependent indigenous communities are the dominant population. The CCA is therefore an opportunity to meet the twin

objectives of ecological needs by conserving biological diversity and human security through sustainable management and harvesting of natural resources.

NERCORMP is an integrated project on rural livelihood development and environmental conservation initiatives of the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of DoNER, Govt. of India and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in the North Eastern States of India particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya. In order to achieve the biodiversity conservation target, NERCORMP established 1506 NaRMGs (Natural Resource Management Groups) and 4,757 SHGs (Self Help Groups) in 1,320 villages covering 59,987 households. On an average, about 151.47 ha of land area is under CCA in per village and 3.33 ha per households, which may meet the ecological principle and sustain human needs for timber and NTFPs (non-timber forest produces). However, NERCORMP is further expanding to about 1,177 villages and 58,850 households, which will add more CCAs in day to come.

North eastern India being highly dependent on shifting agriculture (jhum) is very critical to deforestation and replacing jhum with mono-cropping will be more disaster as it will loss majority of crop diversity maintaining over the years by the traditional communities. Addressing the issue of agricultural biodiversity, the project promoted about 380 ha of home garden and 219 ha of agro-forestry. Besides, to increase the richness of forest, the project have brought about 570.35 ha under aided natural regeneration, 190.09 ha of artificial regeneration, 88 ha under herbal (MAP) plants, 286.52 ha under mix plantation of indigenous value plant species, 61 ha of land area has been developed as pasture to minimize the grazing pressure on forest and 257.37 ha land area has been brought under afforestation.

Today, the CCAs are providing ecological services to the villagers such as maintaining local hydrology, improving water discharge of spring and small streams, maintaining local climate, nutrients rich run-off from forest floors and minimizing soil erosion and siltation, which helps in minimizing local climate changes. It is also providing timber and NTFPs, which help in maintaining food and nutrient security of the villagers as NTFPs as the major source of food and nutrient supplements for the villagers. In time to time, NERCORMP is conducting C2C (community to community) knowledge and seeds exchange to maintaining and improve agro-biodiversity and also to identify climate resilient crop varieties. This help in improving the capacity of community for climate smart agriculture and ability to adapt climate change. Therefore, the effort of NERCORMP is in the line of this year theme “*Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care*” as it meets the ecological principles and human needs.