

**REPORT ON CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
AT
INSTITUTE OF FOREST GENETICS AND TREE BREEDING
COIMBATORE**

The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) 2016 was celebrated at Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, on 22nd May 2016 in a befitting manner. The theme of IDB-2016 was **‘Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods’**. Biodiversity is the foundation for life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It underpins peoples’ livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity, including economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and so on. Due to various anthropogenic activities, the biodiversity is encountering unprecedented threats now. In this context, if we halt biodiversity loss, we are investing in people, their lives and their well-being.

The IDB-2016 celebration in IFGTB was started with a ceremonial tree planting. It was followed by an invited talk by the Chief Guest, Dr. K. Sankar, Director, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Anaikatty, Coimbatore. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. C. Kunhikannan, Head, Biodiversity Division of IFGTB. Dr. B. Gurudev Singh, Group Co-ordinator (Research) addressed the gathering. He pointed out that still we do not have full information on the lower groups of organisms, particularly the microorganisms and even before recording them, they are lost forever, which is a matter of great concern. He highlighted importance of natural forests as “fixed assets” of biodiversity and underscored the need for their conservation and sustainable utilization. Shri. R.S. Prashanth, Director, IFGTB delivered the presidential address and said that biodiversity is the measure of ecosystem health - more the diversity, healthier the ecosystem. He opined that biodiversity is fast depleting due to population explosion and increase in demand for various resources, including the land. He informed that the decade 2011 to 2020 has been declared by the UN as the “Decade on Biodiversity” and highlighted the importance of collective action for *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation of biological diversity.

Dr. K. Sankar, the Chief Guest released the brochure on the theme of the IDB-2016. During his talk, he gave an overview of the biodiversity status of the world in general and that of India in particular. He mentioned that about 115 species of birds and 58 species of mammals have become extinct in the world. He opined that the burgeoning human population and increasing demands is one of the major reasons for biodiversity loss. He added that in India at present only 5 percent of the geographical area of the country is declared as Protected Areas (PAs), which is not adequate to conserve the biodiversity

of a megadiverse country like India. He pointed out that most of the PAs are small and less than 200 km² in extent, which result in problems like inbreeding and inadequate gene flow. He added that about 60 percent of the rural population depends on forests and various eco-development programmes are underway to reduce their dependence on forests. Dr. K.R. Sasidharan, Scientist, Biodiversity Division proposed vote of thanks.

More than 80 participants, including officers, scientists, staff and research scholars of IFGTB, their family members, employees from other institutions within Forest Campus as well as students/ children actively participated in the celebration.



Arrival of Chief Guest



Tree planting by Dr. K. Sankar, Chief Guest



Tree planting by Shri R. S. Prashanth, Director



Tree planting by Dr. B. Gurudev Singh, GCR



View of the dais



Welcome address by Dr. C. Kunhikannan



Shri R .S. Prashanth, Director presenting bouquet



View of audience



Address by Dr. B. Gurudev Singh, GCR



Presidential address by Shri R.S.Prashanth, Director



Release of brochure



Theme talk by Dr. K. Sankar, Chief Guest



Shri R. S. Prashanth, Director presenting memento to Dr. K. Sankar, Chief Guest



Vote of thanks by Dr. K. R. Sasidharan