

INTERNATIONAL BIODIVERSITY DAY 2013



The day 22nd May is celebrated as **the International Day for Biological Diversity** in each of the 192 countries which are party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Every year, CBD declares a theme for its celebration and the theme for 2013 was **'Water and Biodiversity'**, highlighting the relationship between biological diversity and the conservation of water as a natural resource. Also, this theme coincides with the declaration of the year 2013 as the 'International Year for Water Cooperation' by the United Nations.

Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board celebrates the International Day for Biological Diversity each year focusing primarily on raising awareness among the people on the subject of biodiversity. This year, programmes celebrating the International Biodiversity Day, 22nd May, 2013 were carried out in three divisions – Nainital, Chakraka, and Haridwar – apart from the main programme which was organized by the Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board in the conference hall of the Hotel Madhuban, Dehradun. **Padmashri Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi**, one of the most respected figures in the field of environment was the Chief Guest of the event.

The event commenced with an introduction by Mr. Samir Sinha, Member Secretary, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board welcoming all invited guests, including officers of the different departments of the State Government of Uttarakhand, Scientists and Experts

and the members of the print and electronic media. The special guests on the panel apart from the Chief Guest included Dr. B.S. Burfal, former Chairman, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, Dr. R.B.S. Rawat, PCCF, Uttarakhand and Dr. Rakesh Shah, Chairman, Uttarakhand, Shri Jairaj, Addl. PCCF, Shri Monish Mullick, CCF.

Dr. Rakesh Shah, Chairman, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, addressed the assembly, introducing individually the panel members, highlighting their contribution in the field of biodiversity conservation and presented them with a Tulsi plant and a traditional shawl. With the help of relevant facts and figures, Dr. Shah explained the role of biodiversity in the services of water purification and ground water recharge, thus accentuating the relationship between water and biodiversity.

On this occasion, a report prepared by the National Biodiversity Authority, titled '**Watering Biodiversity, Ecosystems Management**', was officially launched at the event, and the copies of the report were distributed among the guests & the participants.

Dr. B.S. Burfal, Former Chairman, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, in his address, emphasized that the management of biological resources and water must go hand-in-hand as they are closely related. He also stated that this required increased coordination between forest managers and policy makers.

Dr. R.B.S. Rawat, PCCF, Uttarakhand addressed the participants by saying that the best introduction of any country/state is the presence of biodiversity. He stressed on the effective and sustainable use of water by every individual through planned techniques which need to be adopted. He quoted that the protection of trees is not the responsibility of the Forest Department alone, and that there is a greater need for public involvement in urban as well as rural areas. He concluded by saying that the presence of rich biodiversity is a part of the identity of the State of Uttarakhand, and it is the responsibility of every citizen of the State to protect it.

Dr. Jatinder Kaur, WWF India, gave a short power point presentation on the project carried out by WWF in Uttarakhand, titled 'High Altitude Wetlands of Uttarakhand'. The presentation was followed by a short film produced by WWF on '**Green Hiker**' – highlighting responsible tourism.

Chief Guest Dr. Anil Joshi in his address expressed his disappointment over the existing scenario, where we have been unable to ensure clean air and pure drinking water for our future generations. He highlighted the necessity of including protection of water sources and biodiversity in our developmental programmes and called for an overall objective of achieving '**Green Growth**' instead of compromising the environment to achieve a purely developmental growth. His address was followed by the vote of thanks given by the Member Secretary, Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board.

This concluded the main programme.