

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Symposium calls for Transboundary Cooperation in ‘Transforming Mountain Forestry’**

(18 January 2015, Dehradun, India)

‘Managing Himalayan forest ecosystems on a transboundary scale is critical for mitigating the impact of climate change for sustaining ecosystem services for the welfare of mountain communities and downstream people’ said Sh Prakash Javdekar, Hon’ble Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India while inaugurating (video message from New Delhi) the International Symposium on Transforming Mountain Forestry at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun today. Mr Javdekar viewed it as a first-of-its kind symposium on a subject of vital interest in the region and looked forward to the outcomes and recommendations of the deliberations.

In his inaugural response, Dr David Molden, Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) stressed the need for paradigm shift in managing forests. ‘A third generation of forest management is imperative given the changing nature of both the mountain societies and ecosystems,’ said Dr Molden. Calling upon ICIMOD member countries in the region to come together to create an interactive knowledge platform as a regional forestry community, Dr Molden stressed the need for transboundary cooperation to not only raise their voice about forest issues but to double efforts to make REDD+ a reality.

Dr P P Bhojvaid, Director, Forest Research Institute, welcomed 250 delegates drawn from 16 different countries, including 8 from the Hindu-Kush Himalayas, which include ministers, parliamentarians, conservation scientists, forest officials, development practitioners and policy makers. Dr Bhojvaid pointed out that the Himalayas is an ‘institution’ with which we need to reinvent our relationship for our own survival. Dr Rajan Kotru, Regional Programme Manager, Transboundary Landscapes at ICIMOD elaborated on the focus and design of the symposium that aims to discuss emerging challenges in mountain forestry in light of the emerging threats of climate change to suggest possible management options, applied science focus and policies in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region.

In his illustrated keynote address, Dr Christian Koerner from the University of Basel, Switzerland pointed out the rate at which trees grow should not be confused with carbon storage because growth in itself is part of the carbon cycle. ‘Old forests are like ‘capital’, storing more carbon but producing less whereas young forests hold less ‘capital’ but provide more ‘cash’, remarked Dr Koerner. People can only live in the mountains only if the ‘capital’ in the form of soil is intact and water is flowing. Congratulating the organizers for a timely symposium, given that the year 2015 will see an end of the Millennium Development Goals,

Dr Maharaj Muthoo, President, Roman Forum in Italy laid emphasis on public-private partnership and forest certification as a mechanism for getting the most out of the sustainable forest development. Dr Ashwani Kumar, Director General, Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) also addressed the symposium, stressing need for paradigm shift in managing forests. Mr Hem Pande, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, while co-chairing the inaugural session reiterated government's resolve to preserve mountain ecosystems and the forests for improving the lives of mountain ecosystems.

State level ministers and parliamentarians from different countries and from the mountain states of India will contribute to a special session on "High Level Segment and Lawmakers' Session". This session will highlight the political economy of mountain forests in the region, and draw contours of policy changes. The five day symposium will lay emphasis on greater collaboration and cooperation to promote global and regional partnerships and networks for collaborative research, socio-economic development, knowledge sharing and policy support.

The symposium is being jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India; Forest Research Institute, India and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The symposium will close on January 22, 2015 with a Symposium Statement on Transforming Mountain Forestry.

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#### Notes to Editor

**Forest Research Institute** <http://fri.icfre.gov.in/>

Established as Imperial Forest Research Institute in 1906, Forest Research Institute(FRI) Dehradun is a premier institution under the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE). Set in the sylvan surroundings of Doon Valley, the Forest Research Institute is a proud testimony to the foresight and vision of foresters and administrators of long ago. The institute caters, in particular, to the research needs of the States of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, etc and at present offers three courses leading to M.Sc. Degree and two Post-Graduate Diploma Courses, besides awarding Ph.D. degree in Forestry.

**ICIMOD** [www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org)

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) is a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge sharing centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Our aim is to influence policy and practices to meet environmental and livelihood challenges emerging in the HKH region. To do this we bring together researchers, practitioners, and policy makers from the region and around the globe to generate and share knowledge, support evidence-based decision making, and encourage regional collaboration. ICIMOD delivers impact through its six Regional Programmes of Adaptation to Change, Transboundary Landscapes, River Basins, Cryosphere and Atmosphere, Mountain Environment Regional Information System, and Himalayan University Consortium. These regional programmes are supported by the four Thematic Areas of Livelihoods, Ecosystem Services, Water and Air, and Geospatial Solutions and underpinned by Knowledge Management and Communication. ICIMOD seeks to improve the lives and livelihoods of mountain women and men, now and for the future.