

Himalayan States come together to discuss Climate Change Action Plan

The state governments of the Indian Himalayan Region came together for the first ever regional consultation meeting to discuss their State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) and specific linkages to the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) on September 18-19, 2013.



Inaugural Session (Left to Right): Ms Janine Kuriger, Counsellor & Director of Cooperation, SDC/Embassy of Switzerland; Mr Ravi S Prasad, Joint Secretary, Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Forests; Dr Nisha Mendiratta, Director, Climate Change, Department of Science & Technology, and Mr Irene Dabare, Deputy Country Director, UNDP India

The regional consultation meeting was organised by the Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme (IHCAP) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) together with India's two national ministries – the Ministry of the Environment and Forests (MoEF) and the Department of Science & Technology (DST) – and with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India.

The consultation meeting, played a critical role in bringing the State Governments of the Indian Himalayan Region to have discussions on important issues and challenges faced by them in formulating their State Action Plan on Climate Change, especially with focus on climate risks and vulnerability assessment, identification of priority adaptation actions for implementation and synergies for their plans with the objectives of NMSHE. The meeting facilitated in bringing the Himalayan States, MoEF (coordinating SAPCC planning and implementation) and DST (responsible for NMSHE) on a single platform for interaction and dialogue to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by the national missions and programmes to support implementation at the state level.



The deliberations over two days identified some important steps for way forward. This includes:

- Need for Himalayan region specific impact and vulnerability assessment study based on new science and climate models and a common framework to the Himalayan States for risk and vulnerability assessment.
- Need for a comprehensive capacity building programme focussing on sensitisation for policy makers and legislatures and training programme to strengthen capacities in the State departments and institutions on climate science, impacts and planning for adaptation and mitigation.
- Funding actions was one of the key needs identified by the States. MoEF is in the process of finalising guidelines for the States to prioritise their adaptation actions under SAPCC and such prioritisation will also help them in identifying funds from different sources.
- Strengthening capacities for implementation of SAPCC strategies and in particular of climate change cells/centres as envisaged in SAPCC was identified as a priority. It was agreed that DST will follow-up with the State governments under NMSHE to support capacity development of Climate Change Cells and also for knowledge management on climate change.
- It was agreed that the consultation meeting will be an annual event, with the next meeting in 2014 organised on one of the Himalayan States. As a next step, more focussed discussion with the States will be organised on a sub-regional basis in the next one year.



Concluding Session (Left to Right): Dr S Satapathy, Director, Climate Change, MoEF; Dr Shirish Sinha, Advisor, SDC/Embassy of Switzerland; Dr Preeti Soni, Advisor, UNDP India; Dr Nisha Mendiratta, Director, Climate Change, DST; Mr Ravi S Prasad, Joint Secretary, Climate Change, MoEF; and Prof N H Ravindranath, IISc Bangalore